

New Skills for Youth: State Success Stories

New Skills for Youth supports a cohort of 10 states to develop and execute plans to increase the number of kids who participate in career pathways and who earn an industry-recognized credential. Across the country, states are already making progress by enlisting employers as key partners, improving the quality of career pathways in K-12 through higher education, and holding themselves accountable for making sure that all kids in all schools have a meaningful opportunity to prepare for a career.

Below are several examples of how state education leaders and business leaders are working to improve career pathways for all students.

Delaware: Expanding Career-Readiness Programs

Delaware launched a regional career pathways initiative in 2014 to better equip students with the skills they need to be successful in the workforce. Partnering with Delaware employers, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations, Delaware Pathways provides students with hundreds of hours of hands-on training where students have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials and college credit through both classroom instruction and internships and/or work-based learning experiences.

Through the New Skills for Youth grant, Delaware is building on this strong foundation to scale meaningful career experiences for all students. In the first phase of the NSFY grant, Delaware has coordinated with postsecondary and employer partners to launch a statewide workforce intermediary at Delaware Technical Community College. The intermediary will support school districts in the expansion of work-based learning and help employers to recruit and on-board youth. Delaware also launched new career pathways for students to develop skills in high-demand fields such as environmental science, healthcare, and education. In just a few short years, Delaware Pathways has grown from serving 1,850 students in the 2015-16 school year to a projected 9,000 students in the 2017-18 school year. Today, Delaware is recognized as a national leader in offering career pathways to students.

Kentucky: Eliminating Barriers to Teacher Certification

Like many states, Kentucky has struggled with recruiting and retaining well-qualified Career Technical Education (CTE) teachers—particularly those who have experience working in the state’s high-demand industries, like advanced manufacturing and healthcare. In 2017, the state took steps toward addressing these challenges through the approval of two regulations. The first regulation removes barriers to certification for occupation-based CTE teachers; the second regulation amends the rank system in an effort to make the teaching profession more appealing for experts with industry experience outside of the classroom. The changes include pay incentives based on degree levels, reduced requirements to complete additional postsecondary work if applicants have appropriate postsecondary experiences, and the implementation of a 24-month professional learning experience for new teachers. With the support of its New Skills for Youth grant, Kentucky is also developing a database to track the retention rate of these new teachers so that the state can assess which strategies are working and how they can better attract and support CTE teachers in the future. Changes to the certification process took effect in October, and already Kentucky is seeing higher matriculation rates for CTE teachers—with 116 new teachers this year, compared to 70 last year. Kentucky hopes the changes to the certification program will help them reach their goal of retaining 90 percent of these new hires. Most importantly, these

changes help ensure that Kentucky's students have well-qualified CTE teachers who can connect classroom learning with real-world experiences.

Louisiana: Expanding Summertime Opportunities

With its New Skills for Youth funding, Louisiana began implementing Jump Start Summer programs through 11 school districts and one course provider. Each district recruited local industry partners to provide students with real-world opportunities. This allowed students to earn industry-recognized credentials and academic credits, and engage in workplace-based learning—all while receiving a wage in return for their participation. For instance, Winn Parish Schools partnered with local industries to offer hands-on experience in customer sales and service—with students observing the computerized operations of lumber mills, planning floral arrangements for a wedding, making pizzas, touring a Med-Flight helicopter and observing surgery on animals. In Rapides Parish, 11 students earned Advanced Metal Technology course credit and 5 students completed an industry-recognized credential in welding through one-on-one experience in the classroom and lab with industry experts. Students also participated in mock interviews and facility tours and received guidance completing and submitting job applications and resumes. Overall, 251 students completed the program this summer, earning a combined 304.5 academic credits and 445 industry-recognized credentials. Louisiana is looking to build on Jump Start Summer programs for next year to reach even more students.

Massachusetts: Supporting Career Advising

Massachusetts has long been recognized for the quality and rigor of its career education programs, but only 20 percent of students currently concentrate in the state's approved Career Technical Education programs. Through its New Skills for Youth funding, Massachusetts is working to achieve equity and help the remaining 80 percent of students access a high-quality career pathway that prepares them for both college and career. As part of this effort, Massachusetts is developing a career advising training initiative that will support student career advising through the "My Career and Academic Plan" (MyCAP). MyCAP will help the state address one of its biggest challenges with scaling career pathways—limited capacity for career advising. The program will increase the state's ability to offer career advising to students outside of the vocational technical system. Through MyCAP, students will develop an individualized, holistic plan to connect college and career. All plans are student-centered and student-driven. Programs that receive the high-quality college and career pathway designation are required to provide a MyCAP process for students. By allowing more students to access these pathways, the MyCAP program will help transform career preparation throughout the state of Massachusetts.

Nevada: A Hub of Information

Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval set a vision for the state economy to be more dependent on diverse and skilled jobs—the new Nevada economy. To achieve this, Nevada leaders recognized a need for greater collaboration amongst government agencies. The Office of Workforce Innovation for a New Nevada (OWINN)—first established under executive order and later put into law—serves as a central hub to coordinate between leaders in K-12 and higher education, their workforce counterparts and various governmental agencies. OWINN has allowed for greater cohesion in the education workforce pipeline, and has created greater sustainability for this pipeline to persist in the future. OWINN has already helped facilitate collaboration between industry, education and state agencies by convening these stakeholders to identify statewide in-demand occupations and producing a [report](#) used to align education and workforce programs, as well as identifying industry-recognized credentials that secondary students and individuals within the publicly funded workforce system can leverage. OWINN is continuing to facilitate these types of collaboration in partnering with these stakeholders to design career pathways in high-demand, high-growth industries.

The type of collaboration necessitated by the new Nevada economy is also strongly aligned to the state's New Skills for Youth initiative. Through New Skills for Youth funding, the state will work to create a second information hub to support the new Nevada economy—this time through a virtual resource center for parents, students, educators and employers. The hub will serve as a one-stop-shop for all resources related to the state's career readiness programming and work-based learning opportunities, helping more students gain the skills they'll need in the changing workplace.

Ohio: Building Pathways to Graduation Through Career Readiness

In Ohio, state leaders have increasingly emphasized the importance of preparing students for both college *and* a career. Signaling just how critical both are to a student's success, the legislature passed a bill in 2014 (HB 487) that created **three pathways to graduation**.

1. **Ohio's State Tests** - Earn 18 out of 35 points on seven end-of-course state tests.
2. **Industry-recognized credential and score on workforce readiness test** - Earn an industry-recognized credential or a group of credentials totaling 12 points and earn the required score on the WorkKeys test.
3. **College and career readiness tests** - Earn remediation-free scores in math and English language arts on the ACT or SAT.

Additionally, the recent biennium budget bill (HB 49), permits districts to offer courses where students can earn simultaneous credit through the integration of academic content standards and technical content standards. This means students can fulfill multiple content areas (e.g., biology and allied health) through a single course. Ohio students are also eligible to earn the [OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal](#) by demonstrating workplace readiness skills. As the state continues to integrate college and career readiness into coursework, Ohio has invested part of its New Skills for Youth grant to create Standards by Design—a web-based application to help teachers connect the subject matter they teach with real-world career applications for students. Currently under development, Standards by Design will allow local school districts to design model courses-of-study to meet local educational and workforce needs, while also ensuring academic content standards are being taught. The state is working toward providing high-quality professional development for educators about simultaneous credit, work-based learning, career advising and various other career readiness tools over the coming years.

Oklahoma: Bridging Experience and Instruction

Oklahoma has long had a connection gap between the business and education communities. In 2015, Supt. Joy Hofmeister convened a 91-member Teacher Shortage Task Force to make recommendations to alleviate a severe workforce emergency in Oklahoma education. Out of that work sprung an initiative for the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) to partner with businesses to provide hands-on paid externships in STEM fields so that teachers could see the connections between STEM course content and high-need careers in STEM fields. In summer 2017, five Oklahoma teachers did two full weeks of paid internships with Oklahoma City environmental consulting firm, Terracon. Reflecting on her externship, Beth Bryan, a middle school teacher in Edmond Public Schools, [shared her experience](#) with OSDE: "Every day of my externship, I saw the math and science I taught in class being applied to real-life situations." All involved deemed the externships a win-win-win: Teachers received valuable real-world experience to share with their students, Terracon developed an inside track to expose students to the field and their company, and the future Oklahoma workforce became better prepared. These experiences and observations help teachers like Beth make real-world connections for their students and bring learning to life. OSDE hopes to replicate the Terracon externship model to other businesses and school districts around the state.

Rhode Island: Developing Business-Driven Standards

Employer engagement lies at the heart of Rhode Island’s career readiness action plan. As part of its needs assessment under the New Skills for Youth grant, the state identified an opportunity for better alignment of the state’s high-quality Career Technical Education (CTE) and work-based learning programs with employer needs. To address this issue, Rhode Island enlisted the business community to develop business-endorsed standards for all CTE programs. The new standards detail specific requirements for each career pathway that will lead to a family-sustaining wage job in Rhode Island. For instance, the [Process Technician pathway](#) prepares students to enter an Environmental and Life Sciences program at the post-secondary level and to be ‘job ready’ as a Process Technician, a job that earns an average of \$24 per hour in Rhode Island. The pathway was created in partnership with higher education partners and leaders from several of the largest biomedical and pharmaceutical employers in response to their needs. It combines academic requirements—like life sciences, chemistry and math, with safety training, an earned credential, and work-based experiences. These, and other new program standards, will help all students in Rhode Island graduate with a postsecondary credential of value—a true pathway to college and career.

Tennessee: Driving Postsecondary Attainment

Under the leadership of Governor Bill Haslam, Tennessee launched the [Drive to 55](#) campaign in 2013, with the goal of increasing postsecondary credential attainment to 55 percent of Tennesseans by 2025. The Drive to 55 campaign laid the foundation for the state’s New Skills for Youth investments—building the critical partnerships between employers, educators (secondary and postsecondary) and workforce officials that ensure Tennesseans are able to meet workforce demands. In addition to increased collaboration, the state also recognized the need for more information to understand patterns of postsecondary enrollment and postsecondary pathways pursued by students. This led to the creation of the [Drive to 55: Pathways to Postsecondary](#) reports. These reports outline the postsecondary enrollment figures for the classes of 2014, 2015 and 2016, as well as the enrollment trends for the class of 2016 based on subgroup, ACT scores and participation in Early Postsecondary Opportunities and Career Technical Education. The reports uncovered helpful findings, like the fact that only 75 percent of programs of study offered by districts in the 2017-18 school year are aligned with regional workforce need. They also highlight the programs of study that were most closely aligned to in demand occupations for each district based on specific regional labor data. The reports were shared with all superintendents and provided a district- and school-level (if multiple high schools) view of results, enrollment trends of comparable districts, and guiding questions and resources to support pragmatic changes based on the data. Through the Drive to 55 initiative, Tennessee is working to expand schools’ focus beyond graduation, to consider their graduates’ next steps in an economy that will require at least some postsecondary education. New Skills for Youth funding supports the state’s effort to build district capacity to meet these goals.

Wisconsin: Empowering Regional Approaches to Career Pathways

It’s all about keeping things local in Wisconsin. As part of their New Skills for Youth plan, Wisconsin developed a regional approach to career pathways through the Regional Career Pathways Project. Pathways Wisconsin was formed to both increase the number of students who complete career pathways tied to high-wage, high-demand jobs and to transform the way the state designs career pathways for students to ensure they are prepared for life after high school. Wisconsin is currently piloting four overarching pathway regions—Milwaukee, Madison, Moraine Park and Indianhead—based upon the state’s Technical College system regions. Each of the four pathway regions is led by a regional director who is responsible for developing and supporting access to quality career pathways. The regional directors have been leading the effort to define career pathways and build structures and

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supports for the development and approval of those pathways. The regional directors are also cultivating relationships with the business community and identifying CEO champions who will play a leadership role in the pathways development process. Together, they'll work with representatives from higher education, K-12 education and the community in that region. Under the guidance of the regional director, they'll be a critical partner in the development of career pathways to high-wage, high demand jobs for Wisconsin's students that best meet that the needs of students in that region.