

COUNSELORS

# Building Career Pathways in Schools

Ways to Get Started





JobsFirstNYC, CARA (College Access: Research & Action), and Shared Lane Services partner to build career pathways in schools. Career pathways are an integrated approach designed to help students strengthen their career awareness, build professional skills through work-based learning experiences, develop clear postsecondary and career plans, persist in and experience success in postsecondary education and training, and launch fulfilling careers.

The *Ways to Get Started* series provides examples of how school leaders, teachers, and counselors can embed career-connected learning into the school day by taking early, fundamental steps. This series provides examples from New York City schools that have worked with CARA and JobsFirstNYC to provide career exploration and development for their students.



## 1

## Curate a folder of key resources.

These could be career planning tools like [Career Maps](#), pathway databases like [OneGoal](#), information about summer internships, or flyers from local postsecondary career training programs kept in the counseling office to provide directly to students, families, and teachers. Maintain resources that can support student and family decision making about pathways and their return on investment, including research about the cost and outcomes of various postsecondary institutions and earnings in select career fields. Written materials that are inclusive of multiple postsecondary pathways inform students that they can speak to you about noncollege options.

### ► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

Although **High School of Hospitality Management** has a small advising staff, they strategically curate key resources from the abundance of materials they receive. Through developing a timeline, systematizing it each term, and delegating across a team, the work becomes doable even with low capacity.

**Academy for Careers in Television and Film** already has a diligent roll-out process for sharing information about public and private colleges. They plan to use that same process for sharing resources about postsecondary career training programs.



# 2

## Host a career day with professionals; take it to the next level by hosting a pathways fair with organizations that provide career training.

While high schools have hosted college days/fairs for years, there has yet to be a trend of featuring postsecondary career training providers at these events. Ensuring students can meet directly with career training providers allows them to learn about the opportunities available to them, understand that their school supports these additional options, and make the best postsecondary decision for themselves.

Locate organizations who:

- 1) Want to partner with high schools
- 2) Offer trainings currently that your student population would be eligible for
- 3) Have similar goals around career development for students
- 4) Have good outcomes and ensure success for a diverse student population.

### ► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

**The James Baldwin School** recently hosted a Pathways Fair for NYC Outward Bound schools to expose students across that network to the wide range of programs available to graduates, including service-year programs, workforce development providers, colleges, and borough EOCs.

At **Park East High School's** Career Fair, job-training organizations and service programs have tables and professionals speak to small groups about their own career journeys.

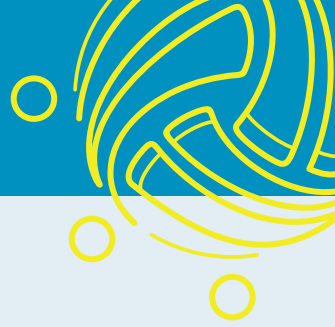
# 3

## Provide career inventories to students annually.

Career inventories can be free or come with a cost. Examples include My Next Move, YouScience, Roadtrip Nation, and those embedded in SCOIR and Naviance. Some exist as part of larger career development platforms, like Xello and Kuder. Ideally, the inventories you select will have labor market information so students will have access to current data when reviewing their results. Ensure there are sufficient pre- and post-lessons for this inventory so students understand the value and have time to understand and explore their results. Students should understand that this is not a test! The outcomes should be kept from year to year, for example in a student pathways Google folder.

### ► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

At the **High School of Language and Innovation**, counselors give a career interest survey to students and use data gathered to inform specialized field trips for students. The results of the survey help counselors select students for various opportunities. Students build an electronic portfolio over the course of four years that follows their growing résumé and gives them an opportunity to reflect on their interests and experiences.



# 4

## Support learners in getting necessary paperwork to get ahead of any documentation barriers.

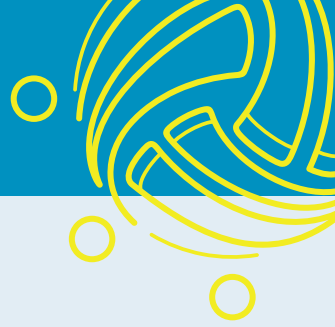
Most jobs post-high school require IDs and driver's licenses. Some students may need to locate or develop working papers. Ensure students understand the documentation requirements for specific roles they are interested in, in advance of applying.

[NYS Youth Leadership Council](#) offers resources for this purpose.

### ► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

At **Richmond Hill High School** and the **Hospitality Management High School**, staff remind students that documentation will be something they need to think about when it comes to I-9 verification. They work with students to get New York State or other basic IDs by providing support through the paperwork process, particularly if students can't get access to certain information from their families.





# 5

## Start earlier in 1:1 advising.

Often, schools will wait until students are finishing their junior year, or in their senior year, to have conversations about postsecondary and career plans. The earlier you start, the more opportunities students will have to take advantage of career development and work-based learning throughout their high school careers, preparing for what comes next.

### ► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

At **Academy for Careers in Television and Film**, staff know there's a strong postsecondary culture because younger students come into the advising office to actively seek more information. Counselors use Career Explorer and Overgrad in all years, which helps them to gather key data to inform their programming.

# 6

## Engage family early and often in career conversations.

Cultural and family nights, parent/teacher or student-led conferences, one-on-one family counseling sessions, curriculum nights, and PTA meetings are opportunities to educate families for any grade level. Tack opportunities for engagement onto other events popular with families by having a postsecondary information table at a basketball game or a “Paying for College” seminar at the fall “Back to School” night. Career and pathway conversations are critical topics for 1:1 family meetings, including parent-teacher conferences and IEP meetings. Encourage students to share their career exploration work with family members using a [Connection to Home activity](#).

### ► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

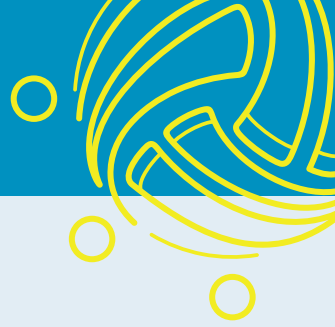
**Richmond Hill High School** engages family around a Postsecondary Plan. They organize Community Nights, Family Financial Aid Nights, Senior Family Nights, and Family Meet and Greets with career partners.

At **Park East High School**, the postsecondary counselor attends IEP meetings to ensure that families of students with disabilities are receiving extra support in career planning.

**Math Engineering Science Academy (MESA) Charter High School** partners with parents, specifically when it comes to helping kids make the transition from living at home to independence.

In spring of junior year, **Coney Island Prep High School** students present their draft list of postsecondary options to their families.





# 7

## Build greater student and staff awareness of pathways options, what their applications entail, and the support students will need.

You can:

- Ask a local partner or two for their application as an example.
- Walk students through the application in an Advisory class.
- Take time during a teacher PD session to show staff the differences between career training and college applications.
- Give students checklists, timelines, and lessons on job training program application steps.

### ► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

**High School of Language and Innovation** will put together a gallery walk during their college and career unit focused on different training programs and college pathways to help students visualize and explore the myriad of options they have.



*We were talking about how when we do the college and career unit again we won't just focus on colleges, but on other training programs, other pathways. And not just specifically students, but everybody doing it.* -Nazia Akther, English Teacher, HSLI



# 8

## Be intentionally inclusive with language.

You can:

- Name the counseling space a “futures” or “postsecondary” office instead of a “college office.”
- Decorate with more than just college pennants.
- Hold a Postsecondary Night educational event for families rather than a College Night, or a Pathways Fair rather than a college fair.

### ► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

At **The James Baldwin School**, the college office has been rebranded as the Futures Office.

*I think it should be careers that come first...when we start talking about college, then that automatically shuts down the conversation for anyone not thinking about college. And so it has to be the other way around... Everyone needs a job and a fulfilling career. And if you start out not tying it to college, it's a more equitable conversation.* -Heather O'Neil at Academy for Careers in TV And Film



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