

TEACHERS

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.



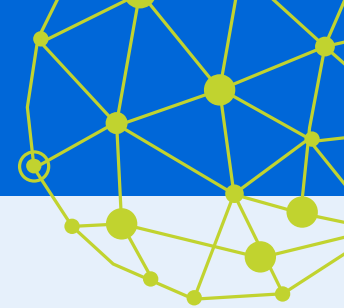
1

Locate entry points in all content classes to connect to careers.

Anytime you begin or end a unit, be clear about what skills students learned. Share what job titles and industries those skills can be used in and how, including information on job outlook and in-demand careers. This can be a simple discussion, or it can be expanded to a larger portion of the course. As a resource, you can use the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [Occupational Outlook Handbooks](#).

► **ANY CLASS CAN BE REWORKED TO INCLUDE A CAREER FOCUS:**

Students can learn about the future of work and in-demand careers as part of 9th grade English Language Arts, Economics, or Science, for example. In upper class service and civic learning courses, career exploration and entrepreneurship can be baked into the course content. You can host a career pathways unit connected to what students are learning, and hear from professionals as part of any content course. Use [CARA's planning tool](#) to expand and enrich a school's current career activities or reframe existing activities as career development.



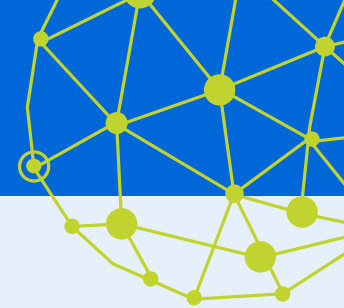
2

Offer opportunities for students to connect to the world of work and specific sectors.

If you have an internship program, try to match the student to an internship in their career field of interest, which will be the most useful experience for them. If you have CTE majors or a career focus in your school, start with connections to those fields. Industry-aligned activities can include job shadow days, research projects or solving real-world challenges issued by an employer (e.g., building a social media page for a small business or creating a marketing plan to reach young adult buyers).

► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

- Students at the High School of Hospitality Management partnered with Ama Raw Bar to make Vietnamese spring rolls and peach-ginger mocktails while chatting about transferable skills and career pathways with restaurant industry professionals.
- Local nonprofits pay student production crews from Academy of Careers in TV and Film to create program videos.
- MECA partnered with alums who work at the Museum of Art and Design to invite students in their Visual Arts course to learn how to give a tour of a design exhibition.



3

Build in time to meaningfully debrief learnings from summer internships, apprenticeships, or jobs.

Often, students participate in internships and do not have the time to debrief what they learned with an educator. Build in pre- and post-conversations with students so they can understand how their learnings have changed themselves, their relationship with school, and their future career interests.

► **USE STUDENT DEBRIEF QUESTIONS THAT ENCOURAGE REFLECTION IN THREE AREAS:**

1. What did you learn about work?
2. What did you learn about school?
3. What did you learn about yourself?

Use the [Teachers Guide for Checking in with Apprentices](#) tool from ExpandedED Learning.

► **HAVE STUDENTS:**

- Interview multiple employees at their jobsite and reflect on what they heard
- Research the company's employee benefits and compare them
- Ask for a résumé review and critique from their site supervisor
- For students involved in Coop Tech, debrief their experience with them to reflect on their learnings about the industry and their desire (or not) to stay involved in the field after high school graduation.



Another thing that I definitely try to communicate to the kids is that knowing what you don't like is also very, very important information. No opportunity is really wasted. Even if you did an industry tour and you didn't like that you realize, okay, maybe working in a cubicle is not how you wanna spend the next 30 years of your life. You know, that's valuable information. So kind of teaching the kid about being aware of how they're reacting, talking about things and what they want for themselves. –Bridget Bordiuk, Art Teacher, High School of Hospitality Management





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Reflect on and adapt the standards and skills you are teaching based on what you learn from students' work-based learning experiences.

Student debriefs of their learnings from career development activities should not only impact students' future choices, but your own decisions in the classroom. You can regularly refine your career development curriculum based on what you hear from student reflections.

► FROM YOUR CONVERSATION WITH STUDENTS:

- What 21st century skills are being addressed?
- Are your subject area standards addressed in the work-based learning experience?
- How can you tie these together more effectively so that student learning connects between school and work?
- What can/should be changed?
- And where/how can you share these learnings with your fellow teachers and staff?



5

Teach financial literacy in your courses.

Economic mobility requires that students have a fluent understanding about money and can make the best decisions for themselves and their families. Project-based learning activities—where students have to build budgets for local organizations or themselves, track their own expenses, or conduct role-plays that include salaries and bills and make choices based on various scenarios—can be really memorable for students. Many schools bring financial literacy partners in during the school day, whether in math, economics, or Advisory. There are also web-based platforms that provide asynchronous video modules for financial literacy. Often, financial literacy organizations provide these tools and coursework free of charge due to grants from local banks.

► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

At **Richmond Hill High School**, there is coursework on financial planning that includes weighing Return on Investment (ROI) on various careers and pathways.

Think about your own investment in education and career preparation and the return on this investment. How would your ROI have been impacted if you didn't pursue higher education (You might consider time, family investment, money, and energy)? Use [these slides](#) to consider those questions and add ROI conversations into your own curriculum.



6

Build curriculum to develop core career skills.

Real-world activities where students complete projects that they will need to do in postsecondary education and in their future career ensure learning is tangible. Students can better prepare for postsecondary, career, and civic success through the development of professional skills. Utilize [Employability Skills Profile](#) and other similar skills lists to ensure students are clear on what skills they are learning in each unit.

► SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT:

Teachers incorporate career skills and connections into project-based learning through a partnership with [PBL Works](#). If students complete a project, such as building a website or making a film, teachers work to frame this in terms of career skills training.

An Economics teacher is facilitating a project on fantasy baseball. An analytics professional from the New York Mets Zooms with the class to help make the connection to real-world activities.

In Business Math, there are budgeting projects in which young people make a roommate agreement and split bills.

In Art History, the students photograph the neighborhood and conduct related case studies at MoMA and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



7

Provide students an opportunity to earn a foundational industry certification.

A [CTE industry-related credential](#) is a tangible way to build students' résumés and provides students a pathway to gain a first job in a field of interest while in high school, postsecondary education, or beyond. This could be a safety credential that allows a young adult to start a career in that industry and be on a worksite (e.g., food handler's certificate, OSHA-30 for construction). Or, it could be a skills credential (e.g., Microsoft Office and Adobe Photoshop, EMT Basic, and CompTIA in information technology). You can consider partnering with a workforce development organization or community college in your neighborhood in order to provide these credentials, as they require licensing to teach.



8

Ensure equity in career development.

There is a clear history of racial and socioeconomic tracking in career development and CTE programming. School staff and students need to carefully reflect on unconscious bias in this area. An [“Uncovering Beliefs and Biases” activity](#) can support addressing that. It is also useful to look at disaggregated data about student career interests and equitable access to WBL experiences to find trends and gaps. Think critically about who is taking certain career classes/electives, signing up for field trips and internships, or being recommended for other work-based learning opportunities. Grow your awareness about your biases and assumptions regarding student interests and skills. Work with your grade or department team to ensure you are being thoughtful about what each student has access to, and that not only the most academically prepared students are able to participate in internships and other career development activities.



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