

Deepening Career-Connected Learning in Schools

Recommendations for Strengthening
New York City Public Schools' Industry Commissions



August 2024



Executive Summary

Introduction

Over the past ten years, industry commissions¹—composed of industry leaders, skills-based postsecondary training providers, and school-based staff—have provided resources for career-connected learning programs in New York City’s public schools, particularly CTE (career and technical education) schools. However, there is an urgent need to enhance the effectiveness and reach of these commissions in order to help fulfill Chancellor David Banks’s “north star” of ensuring that all students graduate with a plan and on a path toward long-term economic security.

To this end, JobsFirstNYC partnered with the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) Office of Student Pathways to seek input from key stakeholders² and develop a set of actionable recommendations for consideration by the Pathways Advisory Council and Chancellor Banks aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and reach of the industry commissions, thereby helping cultivate a highly skilled, globally competitive workforce in New York City.

Methodology

The recommendations in this report were informed by a structured and inclusive process that engaged key stakeholders. The process involved exploratory research regarding past efforts of industry commissions; background research on best practices in career-connected learning; and meetings with NYCPS leadership and industry commissions, interviews with industry commission chairs, the formation of a provisional Steering Committee, and open-design sessions.

Findings

The current state of the industry commissions reveals varying levels of development, engagement, and leadership clarity. To reach the “ideal” state, the commissions need proper staffing, more resources, and deeper engagement with educators and young adults. Clear expectations, responsibilities, and documented procedures are essential for effective functioning.

Recommendations

This report outlines the following key recommendations for key stakeholders aimed at helping NYCPS strengthen its partnerships with industry leaders, ensure high-quality career-connected learning experiences for students, and prepare students for professional success:

New York City school system:

1. **Build accelerated college and career pathways.** Using the industry commissions as a resource, share information and insights on industry standards, trends, and labor needs with New York City public school educators.

Industry commissions:

2. **Develop future talent.** Increase engagement in student-facing career exploration and readiness support.
3. **Be visible champions of NYCPS students and schools.** Advocate for policy and funding changes at the local, state, and federal levels to make career-connected learning more accessible.

NYCPS leadership:

4. **Provide educator upskilling and professional development.** Engage educators in industry-based opportunities to learn new skills and practices
5. **Strengthen the structure and capacity of the industry commissions.** Enhance governance by clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations for industry commission members, and formalize and strengthen commission governance structures for knowledge continuity.
6. **Improve the industry commissions more broadly.** Clarify the vision and composition of the commissions. Invest in the infrastructure and capacity of the industry commissions (including staff support) and make available relevant student data to inform decision-making.

Actionable Items for the Coming Year

The report also identifies several actionable steps that NYCPS leadership and industry commissions can take over the next six to twelve months in order to begin making these recommendations a reality.

1. Cross-commission collaboration:

- ▶ Shared quarterly meetings
- ▶ Standing cross-commission Steering Committee

- ▶ Further definition of career and job readiness
- ▶ Improved communication efforts
- ▶ Annual commissions convening

2. Industry-specific engagements for career-oriented employer-led events in schools and at places of business:

- ▶ Increased traction based on the work already being done
- ▶ More employer engagements

3. Adoption of commission charters to further formalize commissions' governance and structure:

- ▶ Creation of a Governance Committee and a Recruitment Committee for the industry commissions as a whole
- ▶ Development of an industry commission prospectus
- ▶ Development of industry commission charters that include elements applicable to all commissions and elements specific to each industry
- ▶ Development and implementation of industry commission job descriptions
- ▶ Implementation of a vice chair role
- ▶ Creation of an onboarding process for new commission members
- ▶ Implementation of terms of service

4. Professional development for school-based staff:

- ▶ Essential/durable skills training for educators
- ▶ Overview of entry-level jobs for educators
- ▶ Career readiness and development 101 for educators
- ▶ Effective employment and training-related referrals for educators
- ▶ Job development essentials for educators

5. Industry commission policy and advocacy annual convening:

- ▶ Development of an annual advocacy agenda to promote the work of the industry commissions and the schools engaged with them

6. Inaugural "signature" industry commission annual event

7. A youth-centered approach:

- ▶ Creation of a Young Adult Career-Connected Learning Advisory Council
- ▶ Creation of a Young Adult Speakers Bureau
- ▶ Engagement and recruitment of alumni to serve as industry commission members and as ambassadors for students

Conclusion

This report outlines actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the NYCPS industry commissions. By implementing these recommendations, NYCPS can strengthen partnerships with industry leaders, ensure high-quality career-connected learning experiences, and prepare students for professional success. The continued collaboration between educators, industry leaders, and policymakers is essential to achieving these goals and supporting the economic mobility of NYCPS students.





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