



# K-12 Career Planning and Exploration

## Career and Technical Education

CTE is delivered at both comprehensive and CTE-dedicated high schools and magnet schools, plus area technical centers, community and technical colleges, and some four-year universities. 92% of high school students are engaged in CTE.

(Source: Association for Career and Technical Education)

## State Policies Affecting Career Pathways Programs

Policy	Number of states*
State has a policy requiring individualized career and academic plans (ICAP) or individualized learning plans (ILPs)	35
State has a policy mandating access to K-12 school counseling	28
State has a policy that defines high-demand occupations	25

\*Includes District of Columbia

Source: U.S. Department of Education

## School Counselors and Career Planning

School counselors provide resources and opportunities that help students explore their strengths and interests as well as career fields that might align with these attributes. School counselors provide a school counseling program that helps all students enhance their career development and successfully navigate postsecondary education and the world of work, while recognizing that growth in all three domains of academic, career and social/emotional development is necessary for students to be successful now and later in life. School counselors ensure students have access to explore all postsecondary options, including CTE pathways.

(Source: ASCA Position Statement: The School Counselor and Career Development, 2024)

## Unlocking Career Success

How do school counselors develop an education-to-workforce system focused on unlocking career success?

### STEP 1: Identify Student Goals

Provide postsecondary and career planning to help students identify their interests and strengths and take steps to achieve their future goals. Support career exploration, require individualized learning plans and share the value of career-connected education.



### STEP 3: Connect Learning Experiences

Partner with community-based organizations and nonprofit service providers to enable students to participate in work-based learning experiences alongside rigorous academic coursework. Create time during the school day for advisement based on students' academic and social/emotional needs.



### STEP 2: Support Student Self-Reflection

Offer opportunities for individual and group reflection, including the use of technology, to help students better understand their career interests and passions. Provide information on in-demand jobs and labor market information. Empower families to learn about options and answer questions about career pathways and types of education.



### STEP 4: Plan for Post High School

Help students understand and apply to the appropriate postsecondary option(s) available to them (registered apprenticeships, community and technical college, four-year college, military and workforce). Support social/emotional learning, and create structured planning time.



Source: U.S. Department of Education

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** [schoolcounselor.org/careers](https://schoolcounselor.org/careers)