

State Policy Ecosystem for Student-Centered Pathways

Shared Vision

A shared vision focuses student pathways and competency development in ways that prioritize the knowledge and skills students need for success. For example, at least [16 states](#) have graduate profiles or portraits to serve as a statewide guiding vision.



Learning Opportunities

Advanced course access, [career and technical education](#), [work-based learning](#), [competency-based education](#), [dual and concurrent enrollment](#), and [thirteenth year](#) policies can offer students learning opportunities and impact the quality of these opportunities.



Graduation Requirements and Seat Time

[Graduation requirements](#) and seat-time policies impact the learning opportunities offered by schools and students' flexibility to pursue different options. These policies may offer students alternative options to demonstrate mastery of specific standards or skills. States can balance flexibility and innovation with academic rigor and quality.



What Are Student-Centered Pathways ?

Student-centered pathways include practices designed to meet each student's individual needs. This means creating school learning environments that are personalized, competency-based, student-driven and connected to practical experiences. Student-centered pathways in high schools support the development of skills and knowledge necessary for success in postsecondary, career and civic life.



States take various approaches to support student-centered pathways, but a comprehensive approach addressing each of the following elements of the student-centered ecosystem presents an opportunity for states.

Accountability

Academic achievement and growth are central to school accountability systems, but states have flexibility in other school quality metrics. Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia include college and career readiness in their [accountability system](#). Creating multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate readiness may allow schools to provide diverse offerings.



State-Level Guidance

State agencies, state boards and state education leaders can foster student-centered learning by providing relevant support, guidance, data and resources to schools and districts.



Funding

State methods for determining [student attendance](#) for school funding calculations could impede experiential or self-paced learning opportunities. Transitioning to student-centered instructional models may require investments in training, instructional resources, student supports and stakeholder engagement.



Shared Vision



North Dakota developed the Choice Ready [framework](#) as a common definition of student readiness and a key component in their state accountability system. The framework identifies three student pathways to readiness — postsecondary, workforce or military — and metrics associated with each. The framework also includes essential skills metrics that measure non-academic competencies.

Learning Opportunities



The **Colorado** Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools program was signed into [law](#) in 2015. The [programs](#) are intended to prepare Colorado students for high-skill jobs through innovative partnerships between school districts, community colleges and local high-growth industry employers. Through the six-year program, students graduate with a high school diploma and an associate degree.

Graduation Requirements and Seat Time



In addition to traditional diploma requirements, **Indiana** [requires](#) students demonstrate employability skills and mastery of postsecondary competencies to graduate. Students are permitted to demonstrate [employability skills](#) through project-based learning, service-learning or work-based learning. Students may demonstrate postsecondary readiness through various assessment options, course sequences, credentials or a locally created pathway.

Accountability



Vermont is one of the few states in the country to prioritize postsecondary outcomes, in addition to college and career readiness in their [school accountability system](#). The school quality and student success indicator includes student performance on college entrance assessments, completion of advanced coursework, attainment of industry recognized credentials or military readiness, while also tracking student enrollment in postsecondary education, participation in a workforce training program or military enlistment.

State Level Guidance



The **South Carolina** [Office of Personalized Learning](#) developed a comprehensive [guide](#) to education flexibilities in the context of personalized learning. The guide highlights different options for districts that are aligned with the state's personalized learning [framework](#) in addition to its [profile of a graduate](#) and connected [competencies](#). The office also offers [professional learning opportunities](#) for educators in [districts](#) interested in implementing student-centered learning strategies.

Funding



The **Utah** State Board of Education shifted away from traditional instructional time requirements to permit [learner-validated enrollment](#) for attendance calculations and funding purposes. Utah's personalized, competency-based learning [grant program](#) provides [funding](#) at each stage of implementation for districts to invest in staff and leadership capacity.