

BUILDING CAREER PATHWAYS

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.



▶ Ways To Get Started: School Leaders

01

ENCOURAGE DUAL ENROLLMENT AND EARLY COLLEGE COURSEWORK

Providing opportunities for college level coursework and career focused-classes can help students experience potential postsecondary paths and see them as possibilities. Advanced course enrollment can be accomplished through a College Now Partnership.

On The Power of Early College Coursework:

“ They excel in the college class and seeing the opportunity, a lot of them are, ‘I never thought I would ever take a college class.’ This is me proving myself to my family and any other siblings or cousins.”

- Luz Espinobarro 9 -14 Program Coordinator, TvF

02

GARNER GENUINE INVESTMENT FROM ALL STAFF TOWARD BUILDING CAREER PATHWAYS

To truly spread the work across the school and bring staff along with you, school leaders should involve staff actively in conversations about career development. All staff should learn and understand what career pathways are and how they intersect with advancing a rigorous curriculum and equitable educational outcomes.

Work to debunk stereotypes about noncollege destinations with staff, students, and families. CARA's resource "[Debating Beliefs About Your Future](#)" can be used as a classroom lesson, a professional development activity, or a family engagement piece to get stereotypes on the table for conversation.

03

DECIDE WHAT DATA TO TRACK TO INFORM DECISION MAKING

The data you collect shows what you care about. Ideally, you will build programming in response to what your data shows you.

You can start with the following to build an evaluation and impact system that will enable stronger data-driven decisions:

- ▶ Identify important postsecondary metrics such as:
 - ▶ FAFSA/TAP completion
 - ▶ CUNY/SUNY/Common Application
 - ▶ Career pathway program application
 - ▶ Career exposure and awareness events
 - ▶ Résumé development
- ▶ Ensure your team tracks all students, particularly 11th and 12th graders, and shares outcomes for strategy-making and reflection.
- ▶ Make use of an existing platform like STARS, New Visions Portal, or a [custom template](#).

04

FORM A PLANNING TEAM THAT COMBINES CAREER, POSTSECONDARY, ACADEMIC, AND FAMILY OUTREACH STAKEHOLDERS

Schedule these meetings for the calendar year so that they regularly occur and are prioritized. Including all voices at the table can be helpful for reducing silos between academics, college, and career planning. It is critical that school leaders have a strong presence in these meetings. If you are ready for the next level, cultivate connections with workforce development organizations and skill training providers. They can join your postsecondary planning team in order to bring new expertise into the school.

On Bringing All Voices Into the Conversation:

I think it takes a lot of stakeholders coming together. I think what worked best in this was the administration here. We have our work-based learning through the College Office. And then to expand on that, we have conversations happening amongst advisory leaders. I think through having those conversations, potentially that could shift a culture.

- Heather O'Neil College Counselor, TvF

05

NAME AND COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL'S UNIQUE MISSION AND VISION FOR CAREER PATHWAYS

Use organized staff meeting time, such as grade team meetings and PLCs (professional learning communities), to ensure everyone in the building has clarity. School members should know both what the ambitions and the efforts of the school are and the role they can play in building an inclusive college and career-going culture. Bring new staff up to speed on the school's vision. Additionally, use documents like mission statements to align staff and community.

School Spotlight:

Park East High School mission statement provides a great example:

The mission of Park East High School is to equitably educate students of diverse cultural backgrounds and abilities to conduct research, solve complex problems, and clearly express ideas through discussion, writing, and presentation. Our vision is that graduates will actively engage as voters, jurors, and justice-minded participants in a democratic society. Through intellectually challenging classes and our advisories, students develop agency, celebrate individual and social responsibility, and attain high personal and academic standards. Athletics, student-driven clubs, and school-wide traditions reflect our commitment to being an empathetic, inclusive, and fun-loving community, enabling students to pursue their aspirations for college and career. Our community is guided by our core values, **Purpose, Preparation, and Pride**, which mirror and mold the mission of Park East High School.

06

GIVE LITTLE DOSES OF CAREERS AND SKILLS

Try a job site visit, a career panel, a pizza lunch with an online coding activity, or academic projects that utilize job skills such as teamwork, leadership, and professionalism.

School Spotlight:

- ▶ **High School of Hospitality Management** hosted a career panel on the beauty industry in partnership with Black Girls Can and NARS Cosmetics.
- ▶ **Shared Lane's Digital Careers Toolkit** has numerous mini-projects designed to introduce young people to the skills and thinking entailed in high-growth tech careers. For example, students can create a detailed plan for a family reunion or school event using a Trello project board in the context of learning about career paths for Project Management.

EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCES, AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

07

Cultivate connections with organizations that have expertise and provide specific support for English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and undocumented families.

You can invite organizations to speak with your staff or school community about the resources they offer. Some examples include:

- ▶ Make the Road
- ▶ The New York State Youth Leadership Council
- ▶ John Jay and Brooklyn College's Immigrant Student Success Centers
- ▶ IncludeNYC
- ▶ Your local CUNY's Office of Disability Services

CARVE OUT TIME AND RESOURCES FOR CAREER PATHWAYS PLANNING. PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL STAFF

08

Finding time on Election Day or Chancellor's Day for the entire staff (or a large majority) to engage in professional development is crucial. Grade team time is useful to establish a common language, approach, and understanding for postsecondary efforts. Our activity "[Putting Students at the Center](#)" is a useful PD exercise for considering the school's existing level of equitable pathway support for students.

School Spotlight:

One of the things we determined is that we're doing millions of things in the school that not all are aware of. So we devoted Election Day to doing PD for all of our staff where they could hear different perspectives from our Work Based Learning Coordinator, from the College Office, from each internship.

- Nancy Moore, Assistant Principal, H.S. of Fashion Industries

09

BE INTENTIONALLY INCLUSIVE WITH LANGUAGE

Encourage the use of phrases like "future planning" or "postsecondary," rather than college. Name the counseling space a "futures" or "postsecondary" office. Hold a Postsecondary Night educational event for families rather than a College Night or a Pathways Fair rather than a college fair. High School for Hospitality Management suggests that staff even reframe the questions used when talking to students about postsecondary pathways:

On The Importance of Using a Common Language:

“ *Doing a PD was super helpful because it really highlighted the importance of language. Now there are a lot more of us saying “postsecondary” or “college and career” [instead of just college]. And the language that we use helps students feel accepted.* ”

- Jennifer Leimert, Head of Instructional Support Department,
Park East High School

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BUILD AN ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT STRATEGY

Students can face unnerving challenges post-high school graduation. They can feel isolated and unsure of where to turn for guidance either in the professional world or in institutions of higher education. Alumni support, for both students pursuing degrees and career pathways, is challenging yet pivotal.

Strategies for Alumni Career Pathway Support:

- ▶ Hold a FAFSA renewal event for alums to support them in retaining financial aid.
- ▶ Invite alums to any career fair, hiring fair, or pathways fair the school holds for current students.
- ▶ Use Alumni Days as opportunities for current students to talk with alumni and for alumni to network with each other.