



High School & Beyond Plan Guidance

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Overview

The Tennessee Department of Education (department) is committed to ensuring success for all students. To ensure students are well-prepared for success in their postsecondary endeavors, the High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP) was added to [High School Policy 2.103](#). The HSBP is a personalized academic and career planning tool that evaluates and documents all aspects of a student's path to college and career; it expands the previous requirement for each student to have a four (4)- year Plan of Study. Information for this document was gathered through multiple meetings with a variety of stakeholders from across the state, including school counselors, career coaches, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Directors, Tennessee Department of Education staff, Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) staff, and partners from private agencies.

Key Components

The HSBP outlines and connects the student's goals after high school to the courses or training that align with their student readiness and career pathway interests and equips the student with the skills necessary to meet these goals. The development of the plan begins in middle school, utilizing career assessment data, academic data, and other relevant student data, and is expanded through two years postsecondary as the student progresses through high school based on evolving student needs, interests, and data. The intention of the plan is to ensure all students see a clear pathway from the classroom to career through a proactive approach to bridging the gap between high school and high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand jobs in Tennessee. This document serves as an overview of the current practices, resources available and makes recommendations for improvement to ensure every student, regardless of their background or circumstances, will have access to opportunities that cater to their unique needs and future aspirations.

Foundation

Elementary Career Awareness

Career awareness at the elementary level involves introducing young students to a broad range of professions and the basic concepts of the working world. This foundational stage aims to spark curiosity and open their minds to the variety of careers available, laying the groundwork for future exploration and decision-making. Activities might include classroom discussions, guest speakers, field trips, and interactive projects that help students understand different roles and the importance of various jobs in their communities. By integrating career awareness into the curriculum, educators can help children make connections between their interests, skills, and potential future careers, fostering a sense of purpose and motivation in their education.

At this stage, career awareness also emphasizes the development of essential skills and attributes such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and responsibility. By engaging in activities that promote these skills, students begin to understand how their personal strengths can be applied in various professional contexts. Early career awareness not only helps students recognize the value of their education but also encourages them to envision a future where they can contribute meaningfully to society. This early exposure is crucial in helping children build self-awareness and sets the stage for more detailed career exploration in later educational stages. The department provides developmentally appropriate milestones to support common language and expectations for guiding students on a seamless progression starting in grade 5. The [Student Milestones for College and Career Readiness](#) lists actions that should occur at each grade and the resulting student learning that should occur as a result.

Middle School Career Exploration

Career exploration at the middle school level is a critical phase where students begin to delve deeper into understanding various professions and how their interests and skills align with potential career paths. During this stage, students participate in more structured activities such as career fairs, job shadowing, internships, and project-based learning that provide hands-on experiences and insights into different fields. These activities are designed to help students explore a range of occupations, understand the day-to-day responsibilities of various jobs, and start thinking about the education and skills required for different careers. By engaging in career exploration, middle school students can begin to identify areas of interest and gain a clearer picture of their future possibilities.

In addition to experiential learning, middle school career exploration involves guidance and support from educators and counselors who help students navigate their interests and make informed decisions about their educational and career goals. This support includes using assessment tools to identify students' strengths and preferences, providing information about high school courses and extracurricular activities that align with their career interests, and discussing the importance of academic achievement in reaching their goals. By integrating career exploration into the middle school curriculum, students are better prepared to make strategic choices about their high school education, which can set them on a path toward fulfilling and successful careers.

Beyond the integration of career exploration into the academic curriculum, Tennessee students have access to three career exploration courses at the middle school level. Career Awareness is an introductory course designed to build foundational knowledge of career opportunities through (a) examining key characteristics evident in successful leaders; (b) connecting academic aptitude and personal strengths to postsecondary and career success; and (c) bringing awareness to career availability in various contexts. Career Exploration is a course designed to reinforce previous career awareness and strategically explore a wide range of career options through (a) engaging in self-reflection and intentional goal setting by using a career assessment tool; (b) analyzing academic strengths and progress; (c) researching postsecondary options and the requirements for various career sectors; and (d) identifying coursework, extracurricular activities, and

experiences that can support career exploration. Career Advising and Planning is a course designed to show mastering of strategic career advising and planning through (a) articulating personal academic strengths and applying them to a specific career and education requirements; (b) evaluating career options based on the alignment of skill sets, academics, and personality; (c) understanding the components of financing postsecondary education and beyond; and (d) engaging in experiential learning that can support career advising and planning. Implementing these middle school courses provides a structured plan for guiding students through the foundational learning opportunities that lead to a meaningful HSBP.

Also occurring in grades seven and/or eight is the administration of a career aptitude test and a career interest assessment. Administration of these assessments play a vital role in individualized advising. A career aptitude assessment measures the natural abilities, skills and strengths that a student possesses, while a career interest assessment measures personal preferences, likes and dislikes related to different types of work environments. Both career aptitude and interest assessments provide important insights to help a student explore more about careers that align with their goals. While the aptitude assessment measures what a student can do, the interest assessment measures what a student wants to do. Both career planning tools should be utilized in facilitating conversations centered around guidance and advisement.

High School High-Quality Advising

High-quality aligned advising begins early in a student's educational journey and extends through each stage, from elementary to middle school, to high school, and beyond into postsecondary paths. Within the K-12 framework, this guidance is facilitated by the personalized student planning system embedded in a comprehensive school counseling program. At its core, effective advising nurtures students' unique academic and career aspirations across their growth trajectory. Central to this process is the assurance that all students have equitable access to high-quality, aligned advising that allows students to see a clear pathway from the classroom to a career.

High-quality high school advising is a comprehensive, student-centered approach that helps students navigate their academic and career pathways effectively. It involves personalized guidance from school counselors, teachers, career coaches, and advisors who assist students in setting and achieving their academic, personal, and professional goals. This type of high-quality advising includes helping students select appropriate courses, understand graduation requirements, and explore postsecondary options such as college, career and technical education, military enlistment and direct entry into the workforce. Advisors also provide resources for standardized test preparation, scholarship opportunities, and application processes, ensuring students are well-informed and prepared for their next steps after high school.

Moreover, high-quality advising fosters strong relationships between advisors and students, creating a supportive environment where students feel valued and motivated. Advisors work closely with students to identify their strengths, interests, and aspirations and help them develop a clear and actionable plan for

their future. This holistic approach includes addressing any social or emotional challenges that may impact a student's academic performance and providing interventions or support services as needed. By focusing on the whole student, high-quality advising not only enhances academic achievement but also promotes personal growth and self-confidence, equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in higher education and their chosen careers.

Guiding Principles

Student-Centered

The HSBP should be developed in close partnership with the student and relevant stakeholders involved in the student's education. The students' voices and choices are critical in the development of the plan. The student's HSBP should be updated often to include changes in pathways to graduation and changes in goals and interests the student has. The guiding principle that makes a HSBP different is that it is used as an intentional tool to help students navigate through high school with a purpose-driven plan for their future and what their next steps could look like after high school graduation.

Students and relevant stakeholders should have easy and regular access to the plan and should be familiar with its contents. Since there is not a specific template that districts are required to use, local education agencies (LEAs) have the autonomy to create a template that best meets the needs of their school while also keeping in mind the specific requirements of the plan. LEAs may opt to create a physical, paper-pencil template or could elect to create a digital template.

Collaborative and Community Oriented

Through thoughtful collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, advising transcends annual meetings. Using intentional, high-quality advising, the student's HSBP should reflect a holistic approach to their education and to the planning of courses and opportunities that help them achieve their goals. Collaboration is encouraged among K-12, postsecondary institutions, and community stakeholders to better align advising practices and support students through their career and education pathways.

A student's parent(s) or guardian(s) are encouraged to participate in the development of the HSBP. By including these important stakeholders in the HSBP development, it provides the time and space to learn about the opportunities available to their child while in school. In addition, this joint effort can foster a sense of collaboration between home and school. During the development of the HSBP, the child's family will receive accurate and up-to-date information regarding the trajectory of their child's school experience and beyond. This provides a perfect opportunity to share ideas, address concerns, and build a comprehensive plan to support the goals of the student.

Comprehensive and Holistic

The HSBP is more than a tool used to plan coursework in high school. The HSBP, if utilized to its potential, should be tailored to each student's goals and aspirations, giving them a sense of pride and ownership in their education. By connecting experiences in the classroom to their future career, students see the value and importance of their education. Allowing the student to see the big picture can create many positive experiences for them along the way. It can also communicate any academic or extracurricular expectations that will be required of them to reach their goals in a timely manner. The development and maintenance of the HSBP should rely heavily on results from career aptitude assessments or other career interest assessments given throughout the student's educational journey. By using the information gleaned from related assessments, a student's HSBP should reflect classes and opportunities that align with their interests and support progress to their goals as well as map timing of graduation requirements.

Flexible and Adaptable

A student's HSBP should be considered a living document that can change when the student's academic and professional goals and interests change. The HSBP can also change as a result of the student's pathway to graduation changing. For example, if a student fails to earn a required credit needed for high school graduation, the HSBP should be updated promptly to reflect a new pathway to earning a high school diploma. If a student's post-graduation plans change, the HSBP should be updated to include relevant or required courses to help them gain admissions into their chosen postsecondary program or employment with their ideal industry.

Implementation

Timeline

Grade Level	Action Step	Purpose
Grade 7 or 8	Students complete Career Aptitude Assessment and Career Interest Assessment	Assists students with understanding how a variety of skills and attributes impact potential success and career satisfaction
Grade 8	Initial student plans developed through at least grade nine (9)	Utilizes career aptitude assessment data and a variety of indicators
	Students informed of High School CTE Programs of Study offered by LEA	Students identify available CTE pathways that align with career aspirations
Grade 9 <i>(Can be completed in middle school)</i>	Students complete Career Interest Assessment	Assists students in determining interests and making career decisions
Grade 10	Students select program of study and courses are planned accordingly	Takes into consideration elective focuses aligned to the student's career assessment results, including relevant CTE Programs of Study
Grade 11	Students extend the plan through the first two (2) years beyond high school	Includes key deadlines for relevant postsecondary or workforce applications, completion of any required entrance exams and assessments, and submission of applications for financial aid

Essential Actions

Template Design

Each LEA has the autonomy to design a HSBP template that meets the individual and unique needs of their school. While the department will not provide a universal template for all schools to use, examples submitted by other districts can be shared upon request. Additionally, feedback can be offered to support the development of a locally created template. Both of those requests can be made by emailing Brittany.Slagle@tn.gov. It is imperative that LEA's develop a template that meets the criteria set forth by the policy, which includes the following:

- academic, career, and postsecondary plans for grade eight (8) through two (2) years after high school graduation;
- an outline that connects a student's goals for after high school to the courses or training that will equip the student with the skills necessary to meet their goals;
- information regarding Elective Focus aligned to the student's career aptitude and career interest assessment results;

- relevant early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs), industry credentials, and work-based learning (WBL) experiences;
- opportunities for the student to begin building technical skills in a field of interest; and
- key deadlines for relevant postsecondary and related workforce applications, completion of any required entrance exams and assessments.

During the design of the template, each LEA should also develop a system for updating and maintaining the HSBP and identify key stakeholders within the school who can contribute to the intentional implementation. In addition, an LEA should develop a system to ensure that a current plan is included in the student's cumulative record, as well as a system for transferring the HSBP between schools in the event of a transfer or withdrawal. Additionally, a student who has an individualized education plan (IEP) does not require a separate HSBP as the IEP meets the requirements outlined by the policy. However, the HSBP can enhance the transition planning information from the student's IEP. For additional guidance on how the HSBP and IEP can align to support students, please refer to [Understanding the Relationship between HSBP and IEP Transition Plans](#).

Data Considerations

When creating the student's HSBP, schools may want to use a variety of data points to help develop a comprehensive plan that is unique to the student and supportive of their goals after high school graduation.

Career Assessments

A student's career aptitude or career assessment results play a crucial role in shaping their HSBP by offering valuable insights into their strengths, interests, and potential career paths. These results can help students identify areas where they naturally excel and enjoy, allowing them to focus on relevant coursework, extracurricular activities, and WBL opportunities that align with their goals. By integrating these results into their HSBP, students can make more informed decisions that enhance their educational experience. Additionally, the results of these assessments provide guidance for setting both short and long-term goals as well as helping to set realistic career aspirations by understanding what skills and requirements are necessary to achieve their future goals. Aligning the results of these important assessments with the development and maintenance of the HSBP fosters a clear path toward postsecondary education, whether it involves enrollment, employment, or enlistment.

Postsecondary Institution Data

Incorporating postsecondary institution data, such as admissions requirements, financial aid options, and program prerequisites, is essential in developing a student's HSBP. It is paramount that the student understands the specific requirements of colleges, universities, or technical schools so that they can make informed choices in their academic experience to help achieve their goals. Additionally, the intentional application of this knowledge can help students incorporate EPSOs or WBL opportunities into their high

school experience to help lighten the coursework load after high school graduation. Having the knowledge of financial aid requirements can either guide or deter a student from entering their dream college even after acceptance. Outlining the expected cost of attendance early in the student's college search can help narrow down options or motivate a student to take necessary action to increase their grade point average (GPA) or test scores in order to receive merit-based scholarships. Being aware of program requirements ensures that a student selects the right courses to gain acceptance into preprofessional programs earlier in their college career. By integrating this critical data into their plan, students can make more informed choices, manage their academic and financial goals effectively, and ultimately increase their chances of successfully transitioning to postsecondary education.

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) Information

Incorporating information from the CLNA into a student's plan for high school and beyond is essential for aligning their educational and career goals with the demands of the local community and economy. The CLNA should identify key industries, job opportunities, and skill gaps within the region, providing valuable insight into the most relevant pathways for students available to them locally. By analyzing local workforce trends, educational resources, and community-specific challenges, students can make informed decisions about career interests, further education, and training opportunities available to them while still in high school, as well as identify opportunities available to them after high school graduation. Incorporating the results from the CLNA ensures that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in their local labor market while also fostering a sense of purpose and connection to their community. Additionally, it allows students to set realistic and achievable goals based on regional needs, ultimately enhancing their long-term success while contributing to the local economy's growth.

Workforce Data

Incorporating workforce data into a student's HSBP is crucial for ensuring that their education aligns with the current and projected needs for the job market. By analyzing workforce data, such as trends in employment, in-demand industries and emerging skills needs for those careers, students can make informed decisions about EPSOs, career pathways, postsecondary choices, and technical training. This data helps students identify which fields are growing in their region and across the county, allowing them to target specific careers with strong job prospects. Integrating workforce data into a student's HSBP ensures they are prepared for future workforce demands, enabling them to develop the skills and qualifications necessary for success in high-demand sectors.

Essential Opportunities

This section will outline essential opportunities to provide for students to help promote career and postsecondary awareness, exploration, preparation, and training. By incorporating the department's Vision for Career-Oriented Education, Navigation and Advising, educators can determine which activities are most impactful for a student to experience to help guide and inform their plans post-graduation.

All essential opportunities should fall within one of the four levels outlined below:

- *Level 1: Awareness* - Any activity that brings awareness to or broadens the understanding of a variety of careers and postsecondary options available to a student.
- *Level 2: Exploration* - Any activity that allows a student to explore career options and postsecondary requirements for the purpose of motivating and informing decision-making in high school and postsecondary education.
- *Level 3: Preparation* - Any activity that allows a student to apply learning through practical experiences and develops the student's knowledge and skills necessary for success in a given career or occupation.
- *Level 4: Training* - Any activity that allows a student to train for employment and/or postsecondary education in a given occupation.

Essential Opportunity Examples

Future Fairs

Future Fairs can be incredibly beneficial for students by providing them with direct access to advisors, potential employers, military recruiters, and local industry partners. A Future Fair is similar to that of a career fair but allows representatives from all post-graduation pathways to be present in one place simultaneously. By holding a Future Fair, schools can accommodate the interests and plans of all students in attendance, regardless of their plans after high school graduation. For students who are interested in pursuing community college, a four-year university, or even a technical school, a Future Fair can provide a great opportunity for students who have limited resources to obtain information about the different types of programs available. Students who are interested in entering the workforce after graduation can meet with representatives from local industries to learn more about the skills or credentials needed to gain employment. Additionally, for the student who is interested in military service, there are recruiters available to help answer the questions students may have!

Industry Tours

Industry tours can help students learn more about different types of industries found in their local community. These experiences can offer a real-world glimpse into the day-to-day operations of various careers and industries. Industry tours provide students with firsthand exposure to different work environments, helping them understand what specific jobs entail and the skills and credentials needed to succeed in these roles. These also provide an opportunity for students to network and make connections with potential employers. By interacting with these professionals and observing work culture, students are able to assess whether certain careers align with their interests, strengths, and values. Industry tours also allow students to observe and learn about specific types of machinery equipment used in the field.

Postsecondary Institution Tours

Institution tours provide a unique opportunity for students to receive an in-depth look at a college's culture, environment, and available programs. Whether touring a two (2)-year or four (4)-year college or a technical school, students can interact with current students and faculty members to ask questions about the admissions process, financial aid, residence life, and extracurricular activities available on campus. Students can also meet professors or instructors in programs that they are interested in. Additionally, seeing the campus environment in person can help students envision their future and feel more confident in their choice or where to apply and enroll.

Work-Based Learning

WBL opportunities in high school can play a crucial role in helping students decide on a postsecondary pathway by providing them with practical, hands-on experience in a real-world work environment. These opportunities build on a student's existing knowledge obtained through coursework and classes completed in their high school schedule. By engaging directly with employers and professionals, students can gain valuable insights into the day-to-day responsibilities of various employers. WBL helps students understand the connection between classroom knowledge and real-world application, which can make the transition to postsecondary education or the workforce easier for some students. The department maintains a [WBL Toolkit](#) that provides resources needed for a successful WBL program.

Early Postsecondary Opportunities

EPSOs enhance the diversity of a student's high school experience. By providing opportunities that align with a student's pathway, educators can help better prepare the student for their future career or postsecondary plans. By incorporating the intentional use of the HSBP, school counselors and advisors can better map out when these opportunities will occur in a student's educational journey as well as make intentional decisions to help the student leave high school more prepared to enter the postsecondary pathway that aligns with their goals or enter the workforce with skills and credentials needed to feel success in their related field. EPSOs are valuable experiences for students that should be incorporated into their HSBP throughout high school. EPSOs help students build college readiness by exposing them to college-level coursework, which strengthens their academic skills and reduces the shock of transitioning to higher education. In addition, these programs foster important skills such as time management, critical thinking, and independent learning, which are essential for both college and future careers. Students gain valuable insights into potential career paths, allowing them to explore their interests and strengths through hands-on experiences. Moreover, by earning college credits or industry credentials while still in high school, students can save on tuition and fee costs, reducing the financial burden of postsecondary education. Educators can use the [Dual Enrollment and Local Dual Credit FAQ](#) for more information and answers to most frequently asked questions regarding dual enrollment and local dual credit.

Industry Credentials

Incorporating key industry credentials into the development and maintenance of a student's HSBP can enhance their employability skills, helping to distinguish their applications from those of other candidates. Obtaining industry credentials can greatly benefit high school students by improving their employability skills and by providing them with practical, hands-on experience in real-world settings. These credentials are highly valued by employers as they validate a student's skills, making them more competitive in the job market. Earning such credentials can lead to higher wages with entry-level jobs. Additionally, industry credentials can allow a student to explore different career paths to gain a clearer understanding of their future goals. Industry credentials can also complement academic accomplishments and can lead to better program alignment at colleges, universities, or technical schools.

Intentional CTE Course Registration and Participation

Intentional placement into CTE courses that align with a student's aptitudes and interests during the registration process is critical to ensuring students are embarking on meaningful pathways towards their postsecondary plans. Registering students for aligned CTE courses offers opportunities for students to participate in valuable experiences high school that will transfer to life after high school graduation. Mapping out a student's path early helps them stay on track, meet graduation requirements, and maximize opportunities for program completion. In addition, intentional enrollment and placement helps to support and strengthen community workforce development as this helps schools build stronger partnerships with industries and gives students access to real and relevant, high demand skills that improve employability.

Career and Technical Student Organizations

Incorporating CTE coursework into a student's HSBP can open doors for participation in Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). CTOSs play a vital role in student learning by providing hands-on experiences, leadership development and real-world applications of career skills. These organizations complement classroom curriculum and are integral to building employability skills, helping students explore career paths and gain practical experience through competitive events and activities. By participating in CTOSs, students develop leadership abilities, engage with business and industry professionals, and gain valuable networking opportunities at local, state and national levels. Participating in CTOSs is important for high school students because it offers a unique blend of academic and practical experiences that are essential for their future career success. CTOSs offer a clear path for students to participate in career exploration, helping them develop their program of study experience while also gaining knowledge that is specific to the industry they wish to enter.

Pathway Mapping

One of the most important inclusions of a student's HSBP is the intentional use of pathway mapping. By intentionally fostering connections that promote career-readiness, a student's school counselor or advisor can greatly benefit their lives even after high school graduation. By providing a structured, personalized

roadmap for students to follow, school counselors and advisors alike can assist students by working to identify strengths, interests, and career aspirations, allowing them to make informed choices about the courses they take, extracurricular activities to participate in, and EPSOs to pursue. Intentional development of the HSBP can be especially helpful for students pursuing college or technical school training after high school. Students who plan to enroll at a community college or university can benefit from pathway mapping by participating in dual enrollment or Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities that align with their future college major. Students enrolling at a technical school can also benefit from the pathway mapping a HSBP achieves by allowing opportunities to earn industry credentials or clock hours needed to decrease the amount of time involved in earning a certification and offset program costs for after high school graduation. The conversations sparked by intentional use of the HSBP can help identify areas of interest for students taking dual enrollment courses in content areas their high school does not have or has limited course offerings or capacity for CTE program of study course options.

Postsecondary Deadlines

Another key component to a student’s HSBP is a section for important deadlines and working links for postsecondary opportunities. LEA’s can choose to include any relevant information specific to their school in this section (i.e., senior meeting dates, school-specific scholarship deadlines, dates for Future Fairs, etc.)

Table 1
Example of Postsecondary Deadlines

Resource	Deadline	Link
TN Promise	November 1	TN Promise — tnAchieves
Dual Enrollment Grant	Varies by semester	TSAC Student Portal: Login
FSA ID	n/a	Log In Federal Student Aid
FAFSA	March 1	Log In Federal Student Aid
Postsecondary Applications	Varies by institution	
Scholarship Applications	Varies by scholarship	
Workforce Application	Varies by employer	

School Counselors, College Advisors, and Career Coaches

While school counselors are responsible for the oversight of a student’s HSBP, other advising professionals can be utilized in contributing to the plan. The knowledge that each of these advising professionals can bring to these conversations can greatly impact the power of proper implementation of the HSBP. If an LEA opts to use non-school counselors to contribute to the development and maintenance of the HSBP it is paramount that the individual has accurate and extensive knowledge of [graduation requirements](#) and course [substitutions](#), EPSO attainment, and a background in college and career advising. It is best practice to include all HSBP contributors in meetings and training where relevant information is shared. Regardless of

the other professionals contributing to a student's HSBP, the school counselor should still oversee the plan as a whole and make recommendations based on their experience and expertise.

Celebrate Success

School districts across the state are embracing and implementing the HSBP Policy in creative and unique ways!

For several years, Dyersburg City Schools has implemented an Advisory Period as a regular part of the school schedule, strategically integrating the HSBP into this time. The Advisory Period occurs weekly and lasts for twenty minutes, during which students meet with a dedicated faculty advisor assigned to support them throughout their high school journey. During these sessions, teachers guide students through modules specific to the grade level, assist in updating HSBPs, and facilitate a structured pre-registration process before students meet with their school counselors. To ensure consistency and effectiveness, all faculty members receive targeted training on graduation requirements, EPSOs, and available programs of study. This proactive approach empowers educators to engage students in meaningful conversations about both academic planning and postsecondary pathways, ensuring each student receives personalized support.

Career exploration in Dyersburg City Schools begins as early as third grade. Students in grades three through five participate in Career Clubs which is an initiative that aims to help students explore various career fields aligned with their interests by rotating through hands-on experiences and discussions. Experiences like this occur throughout the student's education, creating a seamless, developmentally appropriate progression that helps students build awareness, confidence and clarity around their future career goals. This comprehensive and intentional model reflects the district's commitment to preparing all students for success beyond high school.

Weakley County School District has developed a comprehensive HSBP template designed to enhance academic and career planning for students. Set to be implemented during the upcoming registration cycle, the template not only meets all requirements outlined in the policy but also includes additional components to support more intentional and personalized advising. This template, developed and housed in Microsoft Excel, serves as a centralized tool to guide conversations between students, families and school staff around course selection, postsecondary planning and goal setting. By incorporating detailed sections aligned with student interests, program of study, and EPSOs, Weakley County Schools aims to ensure that every student receives targeted support throughout the registration and advising process.

Sullivan County Schools has integrated their HSBP processes into PowerSchool. By leveraging PowerSchool's capabilities, Sullivan County is able to efficiently store, update and track individual student plans, allowing for greater accessibility and alignment with broader school counseling and planning efforts.

In Putnam County, middle and high school counselors, EPSO specialists, school level administrators, the Director of Schools and other key stakeholders participate in Alignment Meetings to discuss and communicate updates to policies and initiatives. Following these meetings, updates are shared with teachers during professional learning community (PLC) sessions to ensure consistent messaging across schools. As part of the district's comprehensive student support strategy, all teachers are assigned a caseload of students for thirty minutes of weekly Intentional Advising on Fridays. During this time, teachers guide students through pre-determined topics designed to promote college and career readiness. Topics of discussion include setting S.M.A.R.T. goals, writing resumes, completing career assessments and researching results. Weekly topics are emailed to teachers in advance to allow for preparation. Intentional Advising also provides teachers with the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with their assigned students, support their individual goals and assist in updating their HSBP as needed. Updating the HSBP occurs as a pre-registration step and is done prior to the student's one-on-one course registration meeting with their school counselor. Teachers also facilitate grade progress monitoring during Intentional Advising sessions as well. If needed, teachers facilitate parent communication to address concerns.

Jefferson County High School (JCHS) implements a similar process where school counselors, administrators and select faculty members are involved in registering eighth grade students for their ninth-grade classes during two sessions after school. Prior to these meetings, school counselors work diligently to train the staff assisting so they are knowledgeable on graduation requirements, program of study pathways and substitutions. Staff members who assist receive a stipend for their time. Not only do the school counselors train the faculty to assist with registration, but they also teach lessons and facilitate small groups with students preparing them for registration and their HSBP. School counselors use data gathered from their preferred career assessment to determine aligned and intentional student placement into CTE courses and electives. In addition, JCHS has recently conducted professional development for all staff members to inform and update them on new policies regarding graduation requirements, recognitions and college and career readiness (CCR). This approach to course registration implementing the HSBP and policy fosters involvement and collaboration throughout the school.

While each of these districts implement student advising in slightly different ways, they all share a common thread: a strong commitment to intentionality and collaboration. In every case, advising is not left to chance. It is a coordinated effort involving school counselors, career coaches, administrators, teachers, and community partners. This collective approach ensures that students receive consistent, meaningful advisement aligned with their academic and career goals. Both the structures and practices in place and the relationships fostered as a result reflect a deep investment to student success and achievement.

Final Thoughts

Every student deserves the opportunity to explore, choose, and follow aligned career pathways that lead seamlessly into postsecondary programs and opportunities in a high-wage, in-demand, high-skill field. The

department's vision is to set all students on a path to success, by integrating the four pillars of Seamless Transitions, Credentials of Value, Individualized Advising and Work-Based Learning. The HSBP is the conduit that connects each of the pillars together and is a key practice that supports the work taking place with each of the pillars. In addition, Tennessee's restructured, student-based public school funding formula includes a portion of funds being allocated for students enrolled in high-wage, in-demand, and high-skill programs. This tiered system encourages school districts to offer programs of study leading to long-term and emerging local employment needs and ensures all students can have access to such pathways. By structuring career exploration and advising systems to offer students a solid foundation in career awareness, students are well equipped to identify their strengths and interests and show how their unique talents can be applied to regionally relevant career pathways. Tennessee will strengthen its school-to-workforce pipeline. This will enable more Tennesseans to achieve personal and professional success in fields where they can earn wages that support economic and social mobility.

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