

# Q&A: Career Development Plans

## PROVISIONS IN THE NEW LAW

**SECTION 7.13.(a)** *Part 1 of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:*

*“The State Board shall develop standards for an elective middle school course in which students investigate and learn about career pathways. The standards shall align with the requirements for career development plans under G.S. 115C-158.10(c) and include a focus on experiential and hands-on learning.”*

### **Q: What is the Career Pathways Course in the Legislation?**

A: Many courses can meet this requirement, including all middle grades Career Technical Education (CTE) exploratory courses and likely some core academic courses as well. The goal is to ensure that career alignment is incorporated in lesson plans and that experiential learning is offered.

*\*\*Note: there is not a requirement that each student must take a career pathway course, only that it be **available to every student** and that it includes experiential and hands-on learning.*

**SECTION 7.13.(e)** *The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of education, as appropriate, shall provide or cause to be provided, prior to the start of the 2024-2025 school year, curriculum content for the course required in subsection (a) of this section and professional development to ensure that the intent and provisions of this section are carried out.*

### **Q: Who is Responsible for this Requirement at the Local Level?**

A: Content has been designed and is available now. Professional development must be delivered locally, incorporating local tools, partners, and experts in student support services, CTE, and others who provide career counseling to students. Ideally, a designee (or team) would be identified as the lead for each middle and high school. However, effective career planning is best accomplished when all teachers are engaged with the planning process for students. The key difference is that now every student is required to have a Career Development Plan (CDP) before progressing to the eighth grade, regardless of their postsecondary plan (even if the student is on the college track).

### **Q: Will Professional Development and Additional Technical Support be Offered by The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)?**

A: Yes. NCDPI will collect best practices across the state during the pilot phase, collaborating with internal and external career advising entities and provide technical support to ensure that career development plans are student-centered

and based on their interests, regardless of their postsecondary plan – employment, enlistment or enrollment (and/or entrepreneurship).

**Q: What Should PSU’s Include in Career Development Plans for Students?**

**A:** As described in section (c) **§ 115C-158.10 section** of the new law, the State Board of Education (SBE) is required to determine minimum requirements for the CDP. NCDPI will propose these minimum requirements at an upcoming SBE meeting. At a minimum, the CDP must include the following four sections:

1. Self-assessment of the student's aptitudes, skills, values, personality, and career interests.
2. Exploration and identification of pathways for careers aligned with the student's self-assessment that include the following for each career:
  - a. Identification of needed education, training, and certifications.
  - b. Information on the most cost-efficient path to entry.
  - c. Opportunities within the school setting to explore and prepare for the career.
3. Alignment of academic courses and extracurricular activities with the student's identified career interests, including the following:
  - a. Inventory of aligned courses in middle and high school in grades six through 10, and development of best strategies for course selection in grades 11 and 12 to achieve identified career interests, including courses that may lead to college credit.
  - b. Available record of the following:
    1. Completed Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), and dual-enrollment courses that may lead to college credit in high school.
    2. Extracurricular activities.
    3. Awards and recognitions.
4. Creation of a career portfolio, which may include items such as the following:
  - a. Documentation of postsecondary plans.
  - b. Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with parental consent.
  - c. Résumé.
  - d. Occupational outlook for identified career interests.

**Q: Which Electronic Application should our PSU use to Comply with the New Law?**

The law requires that the CDP be accessible via a “designated electronic application.” Partner services such as Major Clarity, Naviance, Xello, NCCareers.org, etc., which your district may already be using to serve students enrolled in CTE courses, satisfy this provision of the law *provided that every*

*student creates a CDP.* In other words, this provision is not directed at only students enrolled in CTE courses but rather all students regardless of their postsecondary pathway.

**Q: What if Our PSU Does Not Currently Work with a Career Development Platform (electronic application)?**

A: NCDPI will create a CDP available on the State’s career hub NCcareers.org; providing a free platform to districts that are not currently using a designated electronic application.

**Q: Is an In-house Created Career Development Platform Compliant with the New Law?**

A: Yes; if it includes all the sections required (listed below) in the new law.

## **ABOUT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**Q: Is Every Student Required to have a Career Development Plan (CDP)?**

A: Yes. Every student will be required to have a completed CDP before advancing to eighth grade. The new law also specifies that every student must revisit (and likely revise) their CDP in the tenth grade, to ensure alignment with their postsecondary plan of choice – employment, enlistment, or (college) enrollment (and/or entrepreneurship).

## **PARTICIPATION IN THE 2023-24 CDP PILOT**

**Q: Which PSUs will Participate in the CDP Pilot?**

A: As required by the new law, the State Board of Education is required to establish a pilot of at least 20 LEAs during the 2023-24 school year. Therefore, NCDPI will solicit participation beginning the week of *October 16, 2023, and ending on October 31, 2023.*

**Q: Which PSUs should Apply for the Pilot?**

A: Ideally, LEAs that have an established electronic application like Major Clarity, Naviance, Xello, etc. Also, LEAs with a locally developed career development application, and others will be included to provide a comprehensive summary of the best strategies to provide high quality CDPs and identify any potential gaps to fulfilling the requirement for NCDPI to “develop and provide a career development plan electronic application to local boards of education and participating charter schools no later than the 2024-2025 school year that will provide access for all students and

parents to the student's career development plan and will integrate with career information available through other State agencies.”

**Q: Are There Other Criteria to Consider for the Pilot?**

A: NCDPI is also seeking pilot districts that model exceptional use of your platform(s) delivering the four required components, helping to design a statewide strategy to meet the intent of the law.

A second key component will be to identify what professional development and/or resources are necessary to support all teachers in delivering exceptional career planning.

Finally, pilot districts will help identify key roles, responsibilities, and resources available to support students as they develop exceptional career development plans (including curriculum, pathways, work-based learning, and advanced learning opportunities (AP, IB, CTE Concentrator, dual enrollment, and/or CCP) that supports a student’s career journey from middle school through graduation, resulting in employment, enlistment or enrollment in post-secondary education.