

You're an Innovation Career Pathways Designee! Now What?!

Priority Areas for New Pathway Designees

“Do-Now” List

- **Grow your internal team:** connect with the teachers, counselors, and building and district leaders whose participation will be critical to launching your pathway
- Ensure these educators have the **resources/training/support** needed to enroll/schedule students, teach classes or lead pathway activities
- **Connect with key external partners:** share your designation success and establish a communication routine with your CTE Liaison, your MassHire workforce board contact, and other key employer/community partners
- **Map out the coming year:** a monthly or quarterly plan will help with task prioritization and sharing the workload among the team
- Spend down any **planning grant funds:** review them now to avoid last minute amendments or leaving dollars on the table
- Create a plan for completing and submitting an **implementation grant funds application** over the summer

First Year Recommendations

- **Start with the BIG WHY:** build and share your vision for pathways and how they align with your school's mission or vision of a graduate
- **Build buy-in:** identify team members who are knowledgeable about pathways and can serve as ambassadors to do outreach with your school staff, students, families, and community stakeholders
- Connect to **sending schools/middle grades** career readiness initiatives
- **Set goals and targets for a few key metrics:** decide how you will assess progress toward your goals for the first year of designation
- **Develop “safe to fail” pilots** to refine and improve program elements like job shadows or enhanced student supports - no one has a fully built-out pathway in year one! But you can pilot and reflect to learn about what will work best for your students and your setting

Common Challenges at this Stage

- **Student recruitment:** plan and schedule information meetings for MS and HS students and families, open invitation events such as speakers or tours of work sites, and outreach to student clubs and community organizations e.g. PTO, School Council
- **Information hubs:** consider how to provide easy access to needed documents, calendars, schedules, and forms to the school staff and community partners who need them
- **Student scheduling:** collaborate with school counselors on planning for course schedules, MyCAP activities, WBL activities
- **Pathway funding:** spend available dollars so that money is not left on the table, and plan for next year's asks. Consider when you need to get in front of admin and the school committee, and where else you want to look for support

Guidance from the Field

Focus on Recruitment and Marketing

- Get students informed and excited early
- Start early→ recruit at middle school with older peers
- Personally reach out to students
- Talk About Pathways! Everyday! In Every Class!
- Individualize experiences by student interest
- Market programming internally and externally
- Find champions among staff
- Continuously beating the drum: outreach to students, school, families, community at large

Establish a Strong and Inclusive Team

- Plan regular meetings with ICP team/instructors and other teams
- Include all teachers and staff across departments including Finance, Grants Manager, Guidance, and Department heads
- Reach out for MassHire support
 - Employers & Training/Credentials
 - Post-Secondary Institutions & Programs
 - Career Center Services
 - Professional Development & Externships
 - MyCap / Post-Secondary & Career Planning support
- Identify who is involved in grants/funding process vs pathway program operation
- Connect with other schools who have done this for awhile to get ideas and materials
- Cold call and seek personal introductions to companies in your community
- Connect with community partners on a continuous basis

Prepare Staff to Support Pathways

- Teacher training on new curriculum and instructional approaches
- Training to use and teach with specialized equipment
- Connect pathways to other initiatives like Restorative Practices and Universal Design for Learning
- Career Speakers Series
- Working with teachers to support students in advanced courses
- Keep an eye on struggling students→ create supports for common classes
- Important that teachers have technical knowledge of pathway (or willingness to learn)
- Can be difficult to find staff for specialized fields (especially within manufacturing/engineering) - be ready to put effort here

Curriculum and Work-Based Learning

- Career Immersion Curriculum (integrate with MyCAP)
- Career Exposure (Career Fair is just a starting point)
- Consider options for culminating internships and capstones
- Use “boxed” curriculum as a foundation but explore different projects/lessons
- Research existing program of studies/schools that have similar classes related to pathway
- Establish where classes will be taught. Classroom/shop space determines tools/machinery options which drives curriculum to an extent
- Create accessible and inclusive pathways for all learners, especially those underserved traditionally/historically
- Be cautious of buying unnecessary equipment
- Connect projects to the school community
- Don't reinvent the wheel

Plan for Continuous Improvement

- Create 3, 5, 10 year plans - strong action plans with delegated duties
- Be prepared to redesign the program (use student feedback)
- Streamline your data collection
- Build post-secondary connections for students (Advanced Courses Dual or Concurrent Enrollment)
- Inform students on current labor market and high demand industry
- New pathway development
- Plan on hiring more staff including a dedicated ICP coordinator (this is not sustainable for a teacher to manage w/ full course load)
- Plan for classrooms, equipment, material and other resources
- Think creatively about sources of funding:
 - Grants
 - Company donations (or paying interns)
 - Partner with other schools & collaboratives