

New Jersey Department of Education

Secondary Education Transformation

Personalized Student Learning Plans

Resource Guide

Spring 2009

**"To teach each student well requires
that we know each student well."**

~ TheodoreSizer

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Secondary Education Transformation in New Jersey

In August 2006, Governor Jon Corzine announced a unified effort between business and education to work on high school redesign in the state. The New Jersey High School Redesign Steering Committee was formed and charged with further developing recommendations resulting from the State Summit for improving New Jersey's public high schools.

The Steering Committee proposed five recommendations in the following education policy areas: 1) Standards and High School Graduation Requirements; 2) Assessment Alignment; 3) Teachers and School Leaders; 4) School Redesign – Learning Communities and Personalized Education; and 5) P-16 Alignment.

Under the specific recommendations related to School Redesign – Learning Communities and Personalized Education, the committee proposed a key action step to evaluate and implement models of personalized learning plans for all students. Each New Jersey student should have a six-year education plan, encompassing their high school years and two additional years of higher education, workforce training, skilled employment, or military service. This plan should also ensure strong adult-student relationships within the school whereby each student should have an adult mentor to assist them with accomplishing their goals.

For more information on the *NJ Steps: Re-Designing Education in New Jersey for the 21st Century, August 25, 2008 Report* visit the New Jersey Department of Education's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ser/>.

The New Jersey Department of Education outlined essential elements of Secondary Education Transformation and, in September 2008, an internal department working group was formed and charged with researching personalized student learning plans from other states. This research included a review of the following:

- Legislation and/or administrative code policies regarding statewide implementation of student learning plans
- Definition of student learning plans

- Components of student learning plans addressing academic, personal and career development areas
- Current models of implementation
- Method of delivery of plans in local schools
- Timeline for implementation
- Funding sources
- Statewide partners to support efforts for implementation
- Potential vendors to assist with training and technical support implementing statewide web based systems
- Incorporation of portfolios into the student learning plans
- Access to plans by school administrators, teachers, advisors, parents, students, etc.
- Inclusion of curriculum standards, high school graduation requirements and statewide assessments.

Proposed Definition of Personalized Student Learning Plan

Personalized Student Learning Plan is defined by the proposed by the New Jersey Administrative Code (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8 - Standards and Assessment for Student Achievement*) as “a formalized plan and process that involves students setting learning goals based on personal, academic and career interests, beginning in the middle school grades and continuing throughout high school with the close support of adult mentors that include teachers, counselors and parents.”

Portfolio Description

One of the key components of a personalized student learning plan is the creation of a portfolio. A portfolio can be described as a portable personal collection of papers/artifacts/reflections used by students to illustrate learning, accomplishments, skills, strengths and best works. Portfolios can be included as part of the personalized student learning plans to help prepare students for work and/or postsecondary education.

Research

Research published by The Education Alliance at Brown University in *Changing Systems to Personalize Learning* found that “personalized learning occurs when high schools make deliberate efforts to design educational experiences that fit the needs, goals, talents and interests of their students.”

The study further suggested that the ideas behind personalized learning are relatively simple:

- Personalized schools promote the achievement of standards for all students.
- Personalized learning begins with individual interest so each student becomes engaged in learning.

- With school support over four years, students become self-directed learners who can use learning to manage their lives.
- As students pursue an increasingly independent pathway, parents become true guides and mentors in the learning experience.
- As students explore real options for their futures in the community, community members become involved in the schools in meaningful way.
- Adults in the school model and benefit from stronger professional and student relationships.
- Against common standards, students learn to set goals and measure success for themselves.
- Reaching all students depends on reaching each one.

For the full report from The Education Alliance at Brown University:

http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/changing_systems/introduction/introduction.pdf.

According to *Breaking Ranks II, Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, NASSP, 2004, the criteria for personalized learning reflects that:

- Each student will have a personalized plan for progress to ensure that the high school takes individual needs into consideration and to allow students, within reasonable parameters, to design their own methods for learning in an effort to meet high school standards.
- Experiences in high school will acknowledge multiple talents and ways of learning to help students achieve the meaningful success that leads to further achievement.
- The high school will assess the academic progress of students in a variety of ways so that a clear and valid picture emerges of what they know and are able to do.
- The school will review each student's personal plan for progress continually and indicate the extent of progress toward graduation and post secondary transition plans.

States Surveyed

The working group researched twelve states identified below. Some links have been provided to highlight sample student learning plans.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Delaware | Link to: Delaware Student Success Plans |
| 2. Florida | |
| 3. Kentucky | Link to: Kentucky Individual Graduation Plans |
| 4. Michigan | |
| 5. Missouri | |
| 6. New Hampshire | |
| 7. North Carolina | |
| 8. Rhode Island | |
| 9. Oregon | Link to: Oregon Individual Graduation Plans |
| 10. South Carolina | Link to: South Carolina Personal Pathways |
| 11. Utah | |

12. Washington

*** Kentucky and Oregon both provide sample curriculum. ***

Plan Components

The most common components surveyed as part of the student learning plans included the following:

Academic Areas

- Plan for academic goals and high school coursework
- Graduation requirements
- Statewide test results
- Link to state curriculum standards
- Plan for support services/interventions
- Postsecondary transition planning
- College/major search/college applications
- Financial aid/scholarship information

Personal Areas

- Interests and skills assessments
- Learning style assessments
- Portfolio (personal profile of activities, volunteer internships, job shadow, awards, presentations, etc. to showcase student work and involvement)

Career Development Areas

- Plan for career goals (short term and long term)
- Career exploration and assessment
- Occupational search and career videos
- Resume builder
- Link to Career Clusters

In addition to these common elements, some states included some unique features including:

- Link to higher education/workforce development state websites (including job opportunities, etc.)
- Link to statewide assessment system
- Student-led conferences with parents and guidance counselors
- Study skills lessons
- Parent component access
- Reflections (essay writing, video, etc.)
- Extended learning opportunities (South Carolina and New Hampshire)
- Customized state and district/school reports
- Teacher, counselor, school administrator access
- Access to student records after graduation

Types of Plans, Method of Delivery, Legislation, Funding, Timelines and State Support

Information was gathered on the types of plans developed: web-based or paper. Grade levels covered in most states were grades 7 to 12.

The student learning plan process and implementation systems were initiated in each state either by legislation or administrative code. Of the twelve states, four states implemented the student learning plan process as required by state legislation.

Each state used various methods to implement the actual student learning plans in their local schools. The majority of states used a guidance and counseling program (9 states) and a few used a teacher/mentor advisory program (3 states).

On average, most states took about 5 years to plan, research, develop and implement student learning plans statewide. Many states implemented a pilot project requiring various grade levels to comply with yearly benchmarks over a five year time span. Other states *recommended* schools follow the program for a few years before requiring all schools to comply by a set date, usually 3 to 5 years.

The states surveyed used a variety of funding sources to support their efforts. Sources included state monies, Carl D. Perkins federal funding, Higher Education Assistance Authority grants, National Governors Association funding, Gates Foundation grants, and Department of Labor funding.

All of the state Departments of Education surveyed have developed stronger partnerships with state school administrators, teachers, counselors and parent associations, state agencies in higher education and workforce development and local school districts as a result of implementing this school reform effort.

Sample States Surveyed

Oregon

Education Plan: A formalized plan and a process that involves student planning, monitoring, and managing their own learning and career development during grades 7 – 12. Students create a plan for pursuing their personal and career interests and post-high school goals connected to activities that will help them achieve their goals and successfully transition to next steps.

Required elements of their educational plan:

- Personal, academic and career interests
- Personal, educational and career goals (short-term and long-term)
- “Next steps” following high school completion and steps for a successful transition
- Plan courses and learning experiences that support the student’s interests and goals.

Oregon Code Language

Section OAR 581 – 022-1510: School districts shall develop a process that provides each student the opportunity to develop an educational plan and build an educational profile in grades 7 through 12 with adult guidance. The plan and profile shall be reviewed and updated periodically (at least annually) and be supported by a Comprehensive Guidance Program as defined in OAR 581-022-1510.

For more information and example plans:

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/certificates/diploma/ed-plan-and-profile.pdf>

South Carolina

A central premise of the Educational and Economic Development Act is that when students are afforded career guidance in the form of meaningful information, appropriate assessments and valid interest inventories, they are able to develop individual graduation plans that support their interests, abilities, and career aspirations as well as to make informed choices and sound decisions about current and future paths. A critical goal for our state's parents, educators, and employers is, or should be, that all of South Carolina's students' complete high school fully prepared for successful employment, further training, or postsecondary study.

Required elements of the educational plan developed by *Kuder*:

- Personal, academic and career interests
- Personal, educational and career goals (short-term and long-term)
- "Next steps" following high school completion and steps for a successful transition
- Plan courses and learning experiences that support the student's interests and goals.
 - A few examples of extended learning opportunities include:
 - Work-Based Mentoring
 - Shadowing
 - Service Learning
 - Internship
 - Cooperative Education
 - Youth Apprenticeship
 - Registered Apprenticeship

A full listing of extended learning opportunities with complete definitions can be found at: <http://www.palmettopathways.org/EEDA2/PDF/Glossary.pdf>.

South Carolina Code Language

Section 59-59-140: An individual graduation plan is a student specific educational plan detailing the courses necessary for the student to prepare for graduation and to successfully transition into the workforce or postsecondary education.

For a full copy of the Education and Economic Development Act:
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Accountability/Technology-Services/old/dts/documents/exec_sum.pdf.

Kentucky

Students across Kentucky are required to complete an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The “ILP” is fully integrated with an Internet based career exploration system called *Career Cruising*. The *Career Cruising* ILP Tool is designed to help students bring together their academic achievements, extracurricular experiences, and career and education activities. This tool enables students, parents, teachers and counselors to work together to develop a course of study that meets the students’ needs and goals.

The Student ILP allows students to:

- Develop a four year high school educational plan
- Record their career, educational and life goals
- Bookmark careers and schools that are of interest to them
- Research scholarships and financial aid opportunities
- Store their results from standardized tests
- Record their extracurricular activities, hobbies and interests
- Document their community services and work experience
- List awards/recognitions they have received
- Upload related files, such as essays, scanned artwork and letters of recommendation
- Create personalized, professional looking resumes.

The Parent/Guardian ILP tool allow them to:

- View the work your child has entered into his/her ILP
- Learn more about the careers and schools that are of interest to your child
- Record your thoughts and comments about your child’s learning plan
- Email comments to your child’s advisor.

For a full copy of their research and report:

<http://www.kyspin.com/Individual%20Graduation.pdf>

Kentucky Code Language

Section 704 KAR 3:305: Until the graduation class of 2012, each student in a common school shall complete an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which incorporates emphasis on career development

Section 4. (1) A district shall implement an advising and guidance process throughout the middle and high schools to provide support for the development and implementation of an ILP for each student. The plan shall include career development and awareness and specifically address Vocational Studies Academic Expectations 2.36-2.38 as established in Academic expectations, 703 KAR 4:060.

(2) A district shall develop a method to evaluate the effectiveness and results of the ILP process. The evaluation method shall include input from students, parents, and school staff. As part of the evaluation criteria, the district shall include indicators related to the status of the student in the twelve (12) months following the date of graduation.

(3) A feeder middle school and a high school shall work cooperatively to ensure that each student and parent shall receive information and advising regarding the relationship between education and career opportunities. Advising and guidance shall include information about financial planning for postsecondary education.

(4) A school shall maintain each student's ILP. The ILP shall be readily available to the student and parent and reviewed and approved at least annually by the student, parents, and school officials.

(5) Beginning with a student's eighth grade year, the ILP shall set learning goals for the student based on academic and career interests and shall identify required academic courses, electives, and extracurricular opportunities aligned to the student's postsecondary goals. The school shall use information from the ILP about student needs for academic and elective courses to plan academic and elective offerings.

(6) Beginning with the graduation class of 2013, the development of the ILP for each student shall begin by the end of the sixth grade year and shall be focused on career exploration and related postsecondary education and training needs.

Delaware

The Delaware Department of Education introduced Student Success Plans (SSPs), “a program designed to empower students to explore possibilities, develop a plan and achieve their goals for the future.”

Student Success Plan (SSP) is defined as “a plan encompassing a minimum of five years including one year beyond high school developed and updated at least annually by the student, the student’s advisor, at least one other staff member and the student’s parent(s) guardian(s) or relative caregiver. The student’s plan includes courses needed in preparation for immediate entry into the work force or opportunities in post secondary education. The plan also includes the support services necessary for the student to graduate from high school. An additional year of high school may be an option for inclusion in the Student Success Plan.”

“Central to the SSP program is an interactive, highly user-friendly website that students can use to learn about careers and schools, set goals and develop a plan for academics, activities or other experiences they’ll need during high school. Teachers and guidance counselors will help guide students in developing their individual SSPs. Through high school, students will continue to refine their plans.”

The SSP program was introduced to all 8th and 9th grade students during the 2007-2008 school year.

To find out more about the Delaware SSP program:

http://www.doe.state.de.us/infosuites/students_family/rhss/default.shtml

Delaware Code Language

Section: 10 DE Reg. 1802

4.1 Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, every eighth and ninth grade student shall have a Student Success Plan (SSP) developed by the student, the student's advisor, at least one other school staff member and the student's parent(s), guardian(s) or relative caregiver. [For a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) the Student Success Plan (SSP) shall also incorporate the other aspects of the transition plan required by 14 DE Admin. Code 925.]

4.2 Each local school district and charter school shall establish a process for developing Student Success Plans that includes:

4.2.1 Actively monitoring student progress, on an ongoing basis and, at a minimum, by the end of each marking period in those courses required for graduation,

4.2.2 Providing support services if a student is failing or in danger of failing courses required for graduation, and

4.2.3 Annual updating of the Student Success plans by the student, the student's advisor, at least one other staff member and the student's parent(s) guardian(s) or relative caregiver] and others as appropriate.

4.2.4 Following the guidelines for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study outlined in the CTE State Plan.

John J. Heldrich Center Report

In June 2004, the New Jersey Department of Education contracted with the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University to conduct a comprehensive study to determine the feasibility, scope, and design of an electronic career portfolio for school districts and students in New Jersey.

The final report “Career Portfolios: An Analysis of their Feasibility, Scope and Design” was published in March 2005. For the purpose of this study the John J. Heldrich Center defined career portfolio as follows:

A career portfolio is a portable collection of papers and/or artifacts used by individuals to market themselves to colleges and employers. It is a dynamic, ever growing, and changing personal collection of artifacts and reflections used to illustrate accomplishments, learning, strengths, and best works. It can be presented in a variety of packages, such as binders, diskettes, or compact disks, web-based, etc. Although it may contain a resume, the portfolio is more comprehensive and has the advantage of providing letters of reference, lists of accomplishments, samples of work, and artifacts.

Career portfolios provide evidence of individuals’ knowledge and skills in working with data, people, and things. Developing a portfolio can be a valuable career awareness and career planning activity for youth, a productive instructional activity involving critical reflection and analytical thinking, and a very useful tool in job search and career change.

The John J. Heldrich Center held focus groups with students, parents, teachers, counselors and school administrators. The research objectives for each of these stakeholders included the following:

Students:

- To learn the extent to which career planning was considered or being undertaken;
- To learn what resources, if any, were used for career planning; and
- To identify desirable features of any school-sponsored portfolio tool, including the desired delivery system (on line versus other methods).

Teachers, Administrators, and School Counselors:

- To gain a sense of the present use of career portfolio systems or activities;
- To determine the feasibility and desirability of implementing a new career portfolio tool;
- To hear about current classroom techniques geared toward career exploration and their success to date; and
- To identify desirable features of any school-sponsored portfolio tool, including the desired delivery system (on line versus other methods).

Parents:

- To learn the extent of which career planning was considered or being undertaken by their children, and the level of parent involvement in this planning;
- To learn what resources, if any, they used to guide the career planning of their high schools child;
- To identify concerns and/or issues pertinent to the development and implementation of a career portfolio tool; and
- To identify desirable features of any school-sponsored portfolio tool, including the desired delivery system (on line versus other methods).

The focus group participants presented a general consensus that a career portfolio tool would be very helpful to students to document and track their academic and work experiences including searching for a job and/or applying to college.

The John J. Heldrich Center in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Education reviewed a total of 15 student portfolio products that reflected a wide range of available options. The products included 10 commercial and 5 custom designed solutions developed by other states. Nine of the products reviewed were Internet-based, three operated via a CD-ROM, and three were paper products.

The product reviews reflected the general findings and revealed the following:

- Internet-based products generally ranked higher on the scoring scale than other types of products.
- CD-ROM products ranked next on the scoring scale, in general.
- Paper products generally ranked lowest on the scoring scale.

Results from this study outlined the following recommendations to the New Jersey Department of Education related to the feasibility of an electronic career portfolio system:

1. Consider creating and implementing a statewide career planning and portfolio system and process available to New Jersey school districts.
2. Provide training/technical assistance and guidelines to school districts on effective career planning, exploration and assessment strategies including the use of a student portfolio system.
3. Continue to further explore the purchase and/or development of an online career planning and portfolio system and process for New Jersey students.

Types of Portfolios

Research done by the John J. Heldrich Center Report describes the various types of portfolios available and the assorted vendors.

Internet

Internet-based products store data, from information about jobs to the files that students create, on remote servers that are usually hosted by the product vendor. An interactive user interface allows users the ability to store and retrieve a variety of data and information from any location with a connection to the Internet. Web-based portfolios serve as evolving records of student progress and encourage students, parents and teachers to organize and present student work in new ways.

Vendors include but not limited to:

- ❖ Kuder Career Planning System www.kuder.com
- ❖ Career Cruising Portfolio www.careercruising.com
- ❖ Bridges Choices planner www.bridges.com
- ❖ COIN Career Community Online <http://www.coin3.com>
- ❖ ECOS <http://ecos.princetonreview.com/>
 - Education and Career Opportunities System
- ❖ Naviance www.naviance.com

CD-ROM Portfolios

CD-ROM portfolio products deliver content from a CD to a desktop or a computer network. Unlike Internet-based products, CD-ROM products do not store the information that students create within the product itself. Data and files that students create must be stored on some other media.

Vendors include but not limited to:

- ❖ Bridges Choices CD-ROM <http://www.bridges.com/cdn/home.html>
- ❖ COIN CD-ROM <http://www.coin3.com>
- ❖ Education Associates (Originally created by South Dakota) <http://www.sdea.org/>

Paper-based Portfolios

Paper-based portfolio products generally consist of a folder (or set of folders) that holds documents, drawings, and other tangible examples of student work. Paper folders are stored on-site at a school to provide students and teachers with ready access to materials.

Vendors include but not limited to:

- ❖ Get a Life (ASCA) http://www.pasca-web.org/career_ed/ASCARelated.htm
- ❖ Talent Assessment Future Planner <http://www.talentassessment.com/>

Curriculum Tools and Resources

Indiana State Department of Education Advisory/Advisee Program:

The Indiana website includes a complete manual of how they run their Advisory Program with curriculum ideas as well as training videos.

http://www.doe.in.gov/sservices/sn_advisor-advisee.html

Kentucky Department of Education

The Kentucky website has provided downloads in three formats: Word, PDF and RTF.

<http://education.ky.gov/kde/instructional+resources/career+and+technical+education/individual+learning+plan>

Oregon Department of Education

The Oregon website provides a few examples of their Education plan.

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/certificates/diploma/ed-plan-and-profile.pdf>

New York Department of Education

New York developed a website, CareerZone, which helps students assess themselves, find career interests, find resources for post-graduate plans, information on different careers, and many other topics of interest to them. It is available to anyone.

<http://www.nycareerzone.org/graphic/index.jsp>

New Hampshire Department of Education

New Hampshire has a link to a list of resources students can use for career planning.

<http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/adultlearning/Career%20Development/documents/ShortListofCareerPlanningResources.doc>

Washington State Department of Education (*Navigation 101*)

“Navigation 101 is a life skills and planning curriculum for students in grades 6 through 12. It aims to help students make clear, careful, and creative plans for life beyond high school”

<http://www.k12.wa.us/navigation101/default.aspx>

Learn More, Do More

“We're here to tell you what you need to LEARN and DO now -- while you're still in school -- to EARN your place in the world and get the education, the job, the career YOU want. The long road to a successful future starts right now, right here!”

<http://www.learnandearn.org/ide/index.asp>

New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA)

“The New Jersey Business & Industry Association is an employer association providing information, services and advocacy for its member companies in order to build a more prosperous New Jersey.”

<http://www.njbia.org/>

New Jersey Next Stop

“Find out what New Jersey’s employers are saying about jobs and careers growing right here in the Garden State. Get vital details about industries, types of jobs, and the cutting-edge career paths that combine many of your talents.”

<http://www.njnextstop.org/>

New Jersey Department of Labor

“One-Stop Career Centers can help you develop your career. Perform a skills assessment, choose a college or technical institute, or search for Financial Aid.”

http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/wfprep/wfprep_index.html

US Department of Labor and US Department of Education

“This informative and free website provides career information, including education and training requirements, wages, demand, and more. Career videos of many occupations may be played online or downloaded. Spanish version of the site is available. Importantly, it also let you search for specific career information, such as education and training opportunities, by state.”

<http://www.careervoyages.gov/>

WorkKeys

“The WorkKeys Assessment System is a comprehensive system for measuring, communicating and improving the commons skills required for succes in the workplace. Currently in use in all 50 states, the WorkKeys System was developed by ACT, Inc., the creators of the college entrance exam.”

<http://act.org/workkeys/> and www.keytrain.com

A Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

New Jersey School Counselor Association (NJSCA) – Section 2 Only

As part of a school counseling initiative, this framework highlights goals, activities and outcomes for effective practices related to school counseling programs. Ideas and strategies to assist students in their personal, academic and career development were submitted by various New Jersey schools. For entire Framework document, visit www.njsca.org and click on NJ Frameworks.

www.njsca.org/pdf/section2.pdf