



# Benchmarking Analysis: Career Pathway Evaluation

**Prepared for: San Bernardino City Unified School District**

# Enrollment and completion data lay the foundation for evaluation

At the most basic level, program success is evaluated through...

## Student Enrollment

Districts measure demand for pathways through how many students take the courses.

“ Kids vote with their feet (...) So I would tell you probably by virtue of how the students choose is how we evaluate.

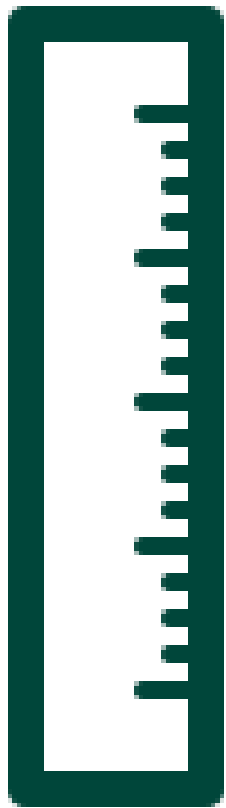
(Director of Secondary Achievement, Medford School District)

## Pathway Completion

Completion metrics are often determined through pass rates on end-of-pathway assessments.

“ They have to pass a technical skills exam, they have to pass an employability or workplace readiness skills exam, and they have to have a B average in their program of study coursework.

(CTE Director, Washoe County School District)



# Assessments must examine the entire pathway journey

**Completion rates do not provide the full picture; districts need to look at what is happening along the way.**

Participants stress that the **day-to-day practices** (e.g. lesson plans, project types) of pathway programs should be examined.

“I would be very interested in knowing more and being able to collect more of the day to day lessons and see (...) how do [successful teachers] deliver that information to students as opposed to programs that are not successful.”

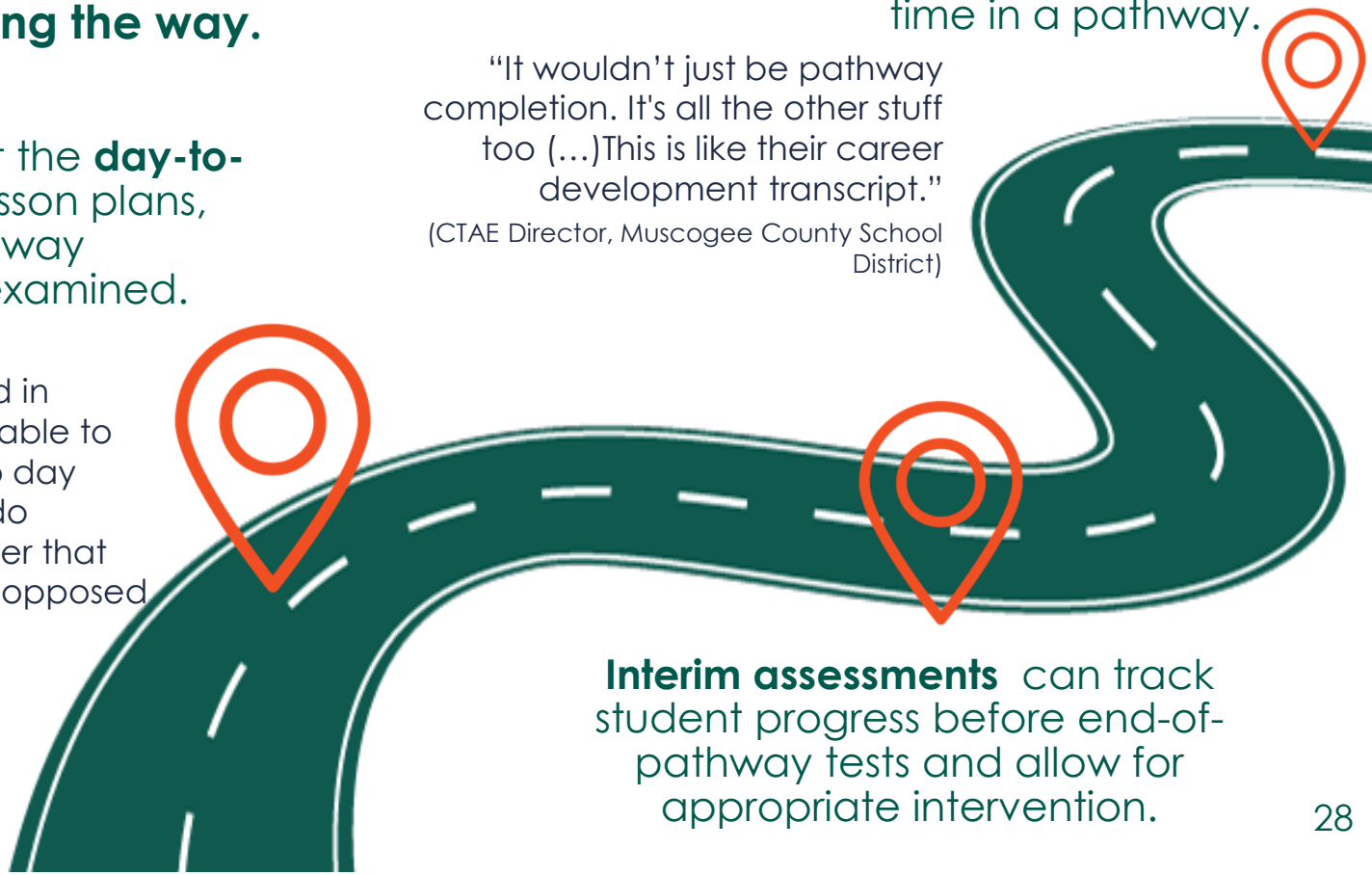
(CTE Director, Irving ISD)

One district is piloting a **portfolio program** in which students can demonstrate work and accomplishments throughout their time in a pathway.

“It wouldn't just be pathway completion. It's all the other stuff too (...) This is like their career development transcript.”

(CTAE Director, Muscogee County School District)

**Interim assessments** can track student progress before end-of-pathway tests and allow for appropriate intervention.



# Industry relevance and career trajectories are the ultimate goal

All participants stress that it is critical to stay updated on local workforce needs and align pathway options, curricula, and assessments with industry needs.

“ We're about workforce development, so if it's not something that's needed in the workforce or if it's a course that doesn't offer students great opportunities, we really shouldn't be offering it.”

(CTE Director,  
Irving ISD)

“ [Certifications] mean something beyond high school settings. They're something [students] can put on their resume that really carry a lot of weight.”

(CTAE Director,  
Muscogee County  
School District)

- **Advisory Boards/Committees**

Districts should have advisory committees for each industry or pathway. These committees must be 'industry driven' and have clear, measurable goals.

- **Industry Certifications**

Districts place the most value in skills assessments that are industry recognized.

# Post-grad data is important but difficult to collect

“

We [should ask advisory committees] to rank or report on what our graduates are doing or how our graduates are fairing once they enter the workforce. Those kinds of reports or that kind of information is very difficult to get because we don't have a really good means of collecting any information on our students once they graduate.

”

(CTAE Director, Muscogee County School District)

When determining the effectiveness of pathways in preparing students for the workforce and a career trajectory, **districts need data about students after they graduate.**

This data, however, is challenging for districts to collect and analyze, as it does not integrate with other data systems.

Districts suggest follow-up surveys with students one and five years post-completion or gathering information from advisory committees.

# PATHWAY METRIC: Work Experience

When evaluating pathways, districts commonly consider...

## Industry Experience

Qualified Teachers/Instruction

Activities/Groups

Facilities/Equipment

Program promotion

Articulation agreements

Strong pathways offer opportunities for exposure to and hands-on experience working in an industry. This includes:

- **Internships/Job shadowing**
- **Guest speakers**
- **Industry visits**

“ How many job shadows? How many guest speakers? ”

(CTE Director, Visalia USD)

“ Do they have kids enrolled in work-based learning and do those training guides match their particular cluster or their pathway? ”

(CTE Director, Irving ISD)

# PATHWAY METRIC: Quality Instruction

When evaluating pathways, districts commonly consider...

Industry Experience

**Qualified Teachers/Instruction**

Activities/Groups

Facilities/Equipment

Program promotion

Articulation agreements

Districts evaluate the qualifications of their CTE instructors, and consider their classroom practices and assignments.

- **Credentials/experience**
- **Professional development activities**
- **Lesson plans, etc.**

“ What are those teachers' credentials? We want to make sure that with our teachers, that we have quality teachers and that they are certified to be in there teaching. ”

(CTE Director, School District of Palm Beach County)

“ What type of teaching strategies are used? Is it project based, hands-on, or lecture oriented? ”

(CTE Exec. Director, School District of Osceola County)

# PATHWAY METRIC: Student Groups & Activities

When evaluating pathways, districts commonly consider...

Industry Experience

Qualified Teachers/Instruction

**Activities/Groups**

Facilities/Equipment

Program promotion

Articulation agreements

Districts look for participation in student organizations such as FBLA, DECA, or the National Technical Honors Society.

“

How many kids do they have that are official members [of CTSOs]? I want to know at least three CTSO activities that their students participate in

”

(CTE Director, Corona-Norco USD)

Enrollment/retention, teaching strategies, and participation are all noted as measures of '**student engagement.**'



# PATHWAY METRIC: Appropriate Facilities

When evaluating pathways, districts commonly consider...

Industry Experience

Qualified Teachers/Instruction

Activities/Groups

**Facilities/Equipment**

Program promotion

Articulation agreements

Assessments examine the physical spaces and tools used in pathway courses to ensure they are:

- **Sufficient**
- **Clean & organized**
- **Up-to-date**

“

We're looking at: do they have the equipment and supplies they need? [...] Are they in good shape? Are they outdated, are they up to industry standard?

”

(CTE Exec. Director,  
School District of  
Osceola County)

# PATHWAY METRIC: Strong Marketing

When evaluating pathways,  
districts commonly consider...

Industry Experience

Qualified Teachers/Instruction

Activities/Groups

Facilities/equipment

**Program promotion**

Articulation agreements

Several participants note marketing as a section of their assessment, in order to ensure that students and their families are made aware of pathway opportunities.

“What kind of recruitment activities do they do?”

(CTE Director,  
Corona-Norco USD)

“How do we market? How do people know how to get into the program?”

(CTE Director, School  
District of Palm Beach  
County)

# PATHWAY METRIC: Articulated Credit

When evaluating pathways, districts commonly consider...

Industry Experience

Qualified Teachers/Instruction

Activities/Groups

Facilities/equipment

Program promotion

**Articulation agreements**

Districts look at whether pathways offer dual credit courses and how well credits transfer to post-secondary opportunities.

“

We take a look at the number of articulation agreements that we're able to negotiate with our post secondary partners (...) can we articulate with our technical college? Are they accepting the quality of the work based on our curriculum and instructional model?

”

(CTE Exec. Director, School District of Osceola County)

# PATHWAY METRICS

## Additional Considerations

While less common, districts may also consider the following as part of their evaluation:

### Career Guidance/ Placement

“...What kinds of things they're doing for career guidance” (CTE Director, Corona-Norco USD)

### Awards & Accomplishments

“...such as different accolades for your student organizations (...) maybe you had a teacher of the year” (CTE Director, School District of Palm Beach County)

### 'Nontraditional Data'

“We [want to make] sure that we don't just have all girls in our teacher academies or we have all boys in our automotive academies.” (CTE Director, School District of Palm Beach County)

### Personalized Learning

“Are we using our qualitative knowledge about their learning style (...) and about their progress to create realistic goals to the individual?” (CTE Director, Washoe County School District)

# Soft skills must be made concrete in order to be measured

Participants highlight **soft skills** as a critical piece for students to learn, and seek **tangible or quantifiable means to evaluate them.**

**Portfolios** build evidence of these skills from student projects and classwork.

Other districts work with industry to create **matrices** of soft skill indicators.

“What we've learned from talking to different employers is that kids are lacking in a lot of the soft skills (...) These students don't know how to come to work on time. They don't understand what work is about and just being conscientious, finishing a job, and those kind of things. **We wanted to develop a way to track all that stuff for a student.**”

(CTAE Director, Muscogee County School District)

“We had 100 employers who came to the table from all different industries and we took these required standards around workplace readiness, employability, and **we asked them [to] give us indicators, like, “What does that look like?”** ...And so from that, we developed 21 different matrices, and we use those.”

(CTE Director, Washoe County School District)



# Qualitative feedback seeks perceptions of relevance, value, and awareness

Questions asked in surveys and focus groups tend to focus on:

## RELEVANCE

- ✓ Opportunities for real-world **work experience**
- ✓ Helpfulness of curriculum in **preparation** for college and/or career
- ✓ What pathways are **in-demand** and the range of pathway options

## VALUE

- ✓ Perceived value of **CTE programming**
- ✓ Quality of **instruction**
- ✓ School **climate and culture**



## AWARENESS

- ✓ How and when they **learned about** pathway opportunities in the district
- ✓ Belief that pathway opportunities are available to **all students**



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