

A “good life” for every student

High schools embrace many pathways to success

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Today's Panelists



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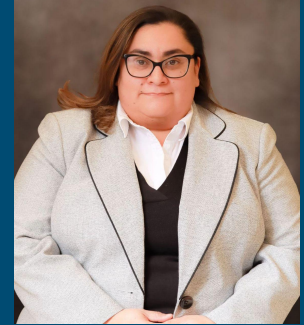
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High schools can lay the groundwork for students to thrive, but they have also been **remarkably resistant to change** — and change is sorely needed.

Why study high schools during pandemic recovery?

Research has shown that many high school educators and administrators **experimented with new approaches** during the pandemic.

Can the lessons they learned during the pandemic and recovery period contribute to more lasting, transformative shifts?

By the numbers



Research focus

We wanted to know:

1. What does **success** mean for students and the adults in their lives?
2. How are schools making **changes** to ensure every student had the opportunity to learn and thrive?
3. Where are schools **succeeding**, and what **challenges** did they face in the “new normal” of a post-pandemic landscape?

An updated purpose (and design)
for high school

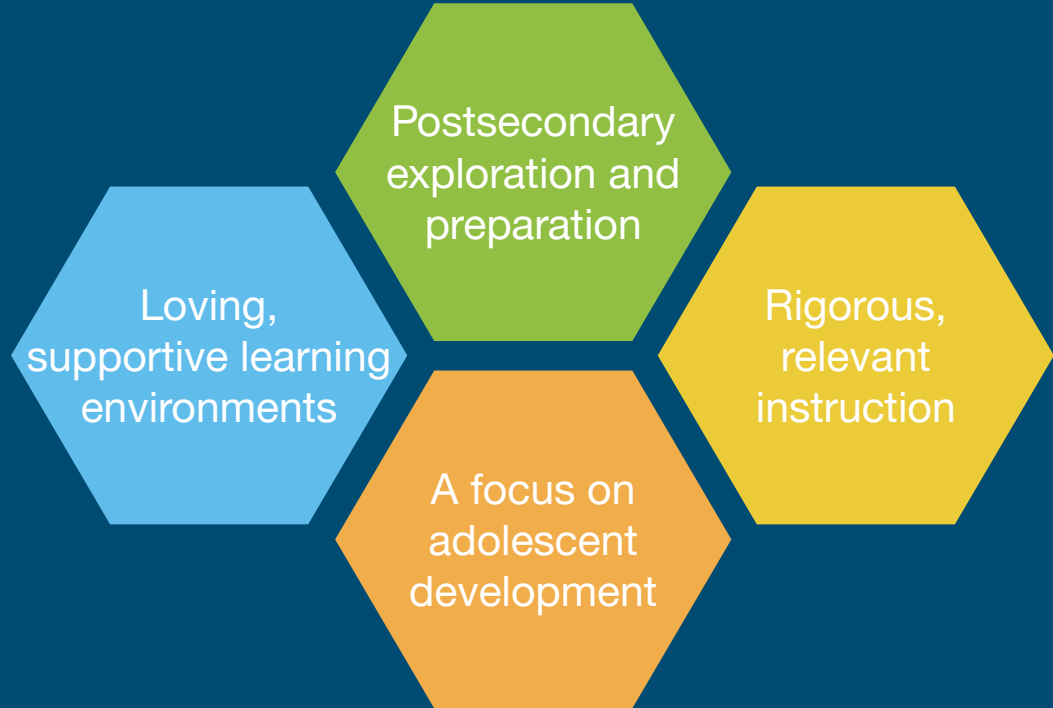
What success means

We heard that high schools should prepare young people not just for college or work, but to be well: to be fulfilled, happy adults with stable, family-sustaining incomes, strong communities, and choices about what opportunities to pursue.

And because young people aren't monolithic in their interests, passions, and needs, high schools should help students discern what success means for themselves—and how to achieve it.

How schools are changing

To be successful, students want and need high schools that provide...



Our focus for today

To be successful, students want and need high schools that provide...



Student voice: Knowing all my options

Postsecondary
exploration and
preparation

*“I think [my school] could focus less on university ... and more [on helping] families and other students learn how to research all their options. ... A lot of students will go into career paths or something that they were just constantly exposed to as a kid. ... So I think **giving kids a broader exposure [to] what’s out there and what they can do to achieve that is important.**” - Student*

Caregiver voice: Knowing what a career is like

Postsecondary
exploration and
preparation

*“I think they need to get out and shadow. Like, **you shouldn't be able to just blindly make a decision** [about] what you wanna do the rest of your life. [My daughter] originally thought that she wanted to go into physical therapy and then **she went and shadowed one and she hated it.**” - Caregiver*

Educator voice: Piquing student interest

Postsecondary
exploration and
preparation

*“I think we can do a much better job of **trapping kids in the honey of each content area**. To be a writer is such a powerful thing. To be a scientist is such a powerful thing.” - Administrator*

How schools are changing

Postsecondary
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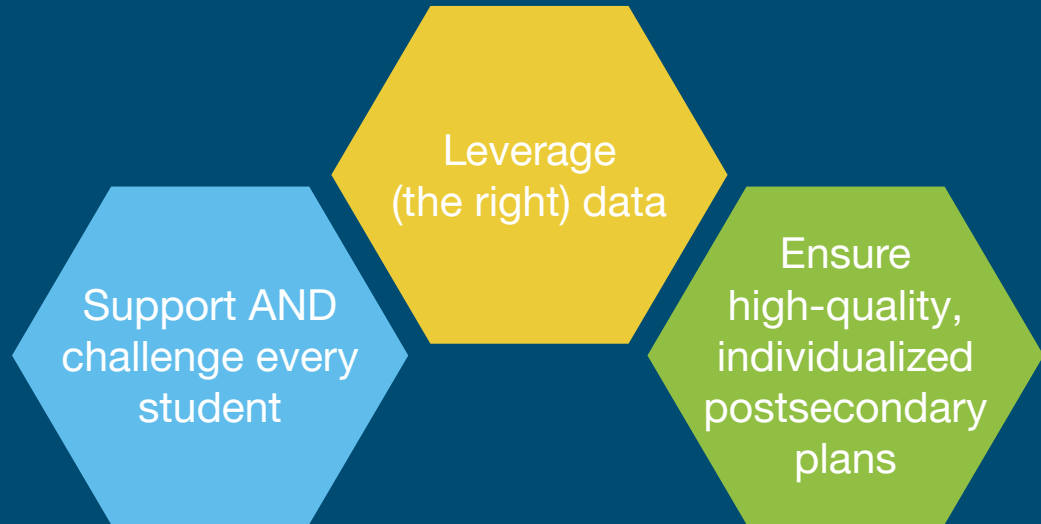
- Refocusing of **student advising systems** to include broader range of postsecondary paths
- Launch of **career centers** that include workforce roundtables and family career nights
- Expansion of for-credit learning experiences to **“connect the classroom to the business world”** through internships on-site with local employers
- Partnership with nonprofits and regional workforce centers to support students to earn **industry-recognized credentials**



Challenges and paths forward

Challenges we observed

Schools grappled with how to best...



Our focus for today

Schools grappled with
how to best...



The equity risks of inadequate plans

“[A good plan is] something that I think [is] hard to define. We don’t have a rubric for it.” - Administrator

Without shared understanding about what a high-quality plan looks like...

- Uneven expectations could flourish
- Disparities in postsecondary opportunities could persist and grow



Challenges in scaling career-connected learning

“There’s not a lot of flexibility in credits for students and where they can take those credits. So if students are not planning from their freshman [or] sophomore year, it’s very difficult for them to double up or triple up on courses in a [career] pathway their junior [or] senior year.” - Administrator

Challenges included:

- Scale
- Awareness
- Advising capacity
- State policies
- Resistance

Recommendations for state and local leaders

To ensure high school students are supported to pursue varied pathways to success without further entrenching inequities, state and local leaders should:

1. Partner with stakeholders to articulate a shared vision for the high school experiences and outcomes that lead to a “good life,” and guide redesign efforts
2. Provide guidance on defining the components of “high-quality individualized plans”
3. Enact policies and practices that expand both career-connected learning and college access for all students

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REINVENTING
PUBLIC EDUCATION

Read the full report and recommendations:

<https://crpe.org/a-good-life-for-every-student-2024/>

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