MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Education for Employment—Milwaukee Public Schools

Our Mission

Milwaukee Public Schools is a diverse district that welcomes all students and prepares them for success in higher education, post-education opportunities, work, and citizenship.

Our Vision

Milwaukee Public Schools will be among the highest-student-growth school systems in the country. All district staff will be committed to providing an equitable educational environment that is child-centered, supports achievement, and respects and embraces diversity. Schools will be safe, welcoming, well-maintained, and accessible community centers that meet the needs of all. Relevant, rigorous, and successful instructional programs will be recognized and replicated. The district and its schools will collaborate with students, families, and community for the benefit of all.

Our Core Beliefs

- Students come first.
- Wherever students are learning is the most important place in the district.
- Educators and school staff have high expectations for all students and provide the foundation for their academic success.
- Leadership, educator development, and child-driven, data-informed decision making are keys to student achievement.
- Equity drives all district decision making.
- Involved families are integral to increasing student achievement.
- Student voice is encouraged and respected.
- Quality community partnerships add value.
- Increased operational and financial efficiencies are consistently pursued to support learning opportunities for our students.
- Central Services supports student achievement, efficient and effective operations, and student, family, and community engagement.
- Public education provides the cornerstone of American democracy.

College and Career Readiness Key Target Areas

1. Support MPS students' on-time graduation.
2. Provide academic and career planning (ACP) opportunities for students.
3. Provide internship and youth apprenticeship opportunities for students.
4. Expand dual-enrollment opportunities for students.
5. Support students engaged in college attainment processes: FAFSA, scholarships, and college applications.
6. Expand industry-recognized credential opportunities for students.

Education for Employment (E4E), also referred to as Administrative Rule P126, is legislation that requires academic and career planning to occur within all public schools. Academic and career planning is embedded within the E4E plan and includes additional requirements that districts must fulfill:

- Prepare elementary and secondary pupils for future employment.
- Ensure technological literacy to promote lifelong learning.
- Promote good citizenship.
- Promote cooperation among business, industry, labor, postsecondary schools, and public schools.
- Establish a role for public schools in the economic development of Wisconsin.
- Publish the E4E plan annually.

Labor Market Information

In our district, we are dedicated to providing academic and career planning for students in grades 6 through 12. Through a variety of activities held twice a month, we focus on preparing students for future success by connecting classroom learning to real-world applications. Our students also study the labor market and job demands using tools such as Xello and classroom guidance in career and technical education (CTE) instruction.

- Semimonthly activities that engage students in both academic and career-focused discussions
- Integration of labor market trends and job demands through platforms such as Xello for practical insights
- Classroom guidance in CTE instruction that helps students align their interests with future career opportunities

During the 2023–24 school year, we launched professional development for school counselors focused on understanding labor market trends and job demand to better guide students toward in-demand careers and relevant skills.

Students explore the following questions to develop their postsecondary plans:

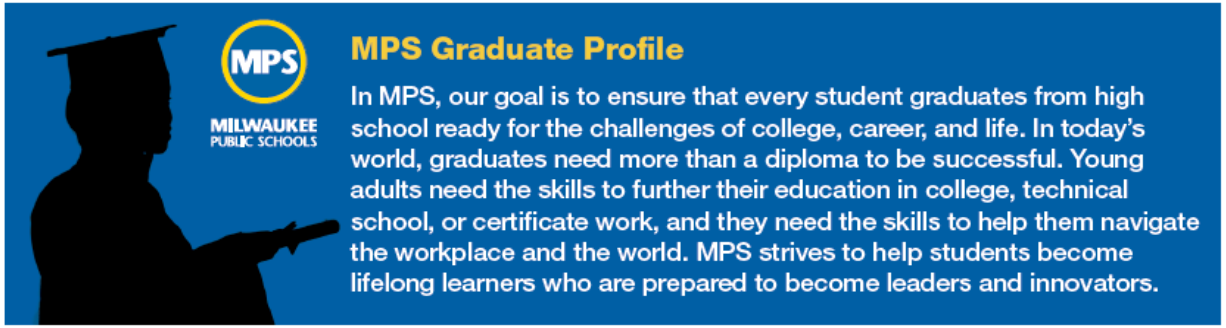
1. What careers align with my strengths, interests, and values?
2. What education or training will I need for the careers that I am interested in?
3. What are the job prospects and earning potential for the careers I'm considering?

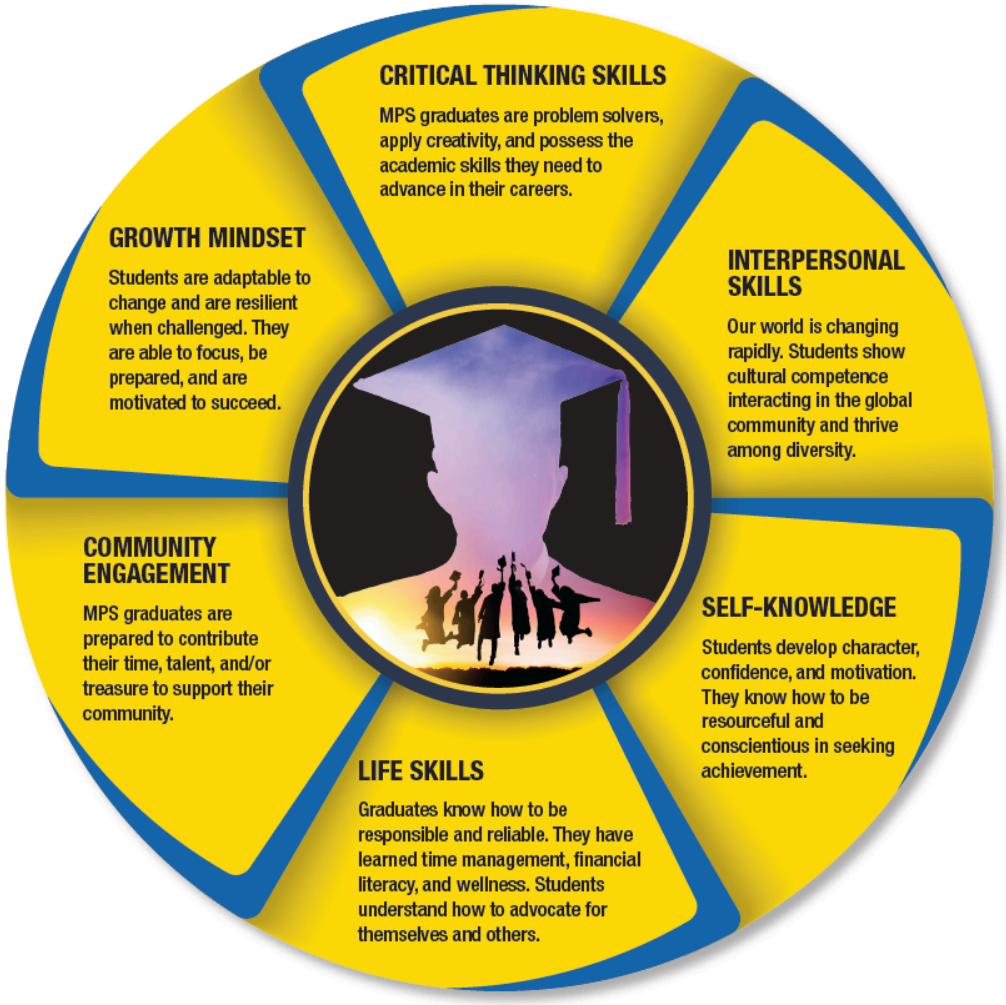
Our current labor market information:
Lightcast Occupation Snapshots
Regional Labor Market Forecast Supporting M7 Region Industry and Education

This information was provided by CESA #1.

Resource for educators, students, and families: Wisconsin K–12 Labor Market Information Guide

Postsecondary Education and Workforce Preparation





Regional Career Pathways align education and training with the needs of the local job market, provide a range of postsecondary options, and result in a high school diploma with an opportunity to have earned an industry-recognized credential, college credit(s), and/or work-based learning experience(s). Regional Career Pathways provide a specific academic and career plan for occupations that are in demand in Wisconsin, allowing schools to focus on student and curriculum activities with input and support from regional employers and higher education.

More than 30 career pathways exist in 15 MPS high schools through the Career and Technical Education office. These pathways include opportunities for students to complete a sequence of career and technical education courses within a given pathway, earn industry-recognized credentials, earn college credits through dual-enrollment opportunities, gain work experience, and participate in career and technical student organization–related activities.

Within CTE, several of our high school CTE teachers have MOUs with Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) to teach courses for dual credit. There are currently 22 MOUs completed for students to earn college credits, with MATC in seven of our high schools with CTE pathways. In addition, one pathway offers a course for college credit with UW–Milwaukee. Finally, two schools have MATC instructors who offer pathway courses for dual credit.

Student Success Stories

- Eighth Grader at MPS's Golda Meir School Is One of the Top 300 Junior Innovators in U.S. – MPS Newsroom
- Four Milwaukee Teens [from Rufus King High School] Accepted to Spelman College Together – TMJ4 News
- MPS Empower Me Tour Promotes Historically Black Colleges and Universities – TMJ4 News

Access for All Students

For students with disabilities, their academic and career plan is shared with their individualized education program (IEP) team to ensure alignment with transition services and postsecondary planning. To support inclusive and effective implementation, a member of the special education department serves on all ACP teams, ensuring that the needs of all students are considered in career and academic planning. School counselors, transition coordinators, and special education supervisors meet annually to ensure that schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. School counselors also meet with the student and parent during the annual ACP conference.

Access to ACP Software Tool

Milwaukee Public Schools students in K5–grade 12 use Xello to learn more about themselves and to develop their academic and career plan. Xello is an online program that helps students build their skills, knowledge, and plans to be future-ready. The program uses an investigative, discovery-based learning process. Each student and parent receives an account that is updated nightly.

Academic and Career Planning (ACP)

The Milwaukee Public Schools district utilizes the ACP process to prepare students for their future. The ACP process is intended to equip students and their families with the tools necessary to make more informed choices about postsecondary education and training as they lead to careers. Academic and career planning is part of our vision for every student to graduate from high school college and career ready. That means students must be competent both socially and emotionally. We want our students to be strong critical thinkers, to collaborate and solve real-world problems, and to persevere when things aren't quite going their way. When put together, it's about making them productive adults with satisfying careers. Parents/guardians are an integral part of the ACP process by supporting ongoing career exploration. Additionally, parents are invited to participate in an ACP conference with their child and the school counselor at **5th, 7th, 9th,** and **11th** grades.

Academic and career plans are created by all MPS students with the support of the school counselor. Teachers and school counselors guide students through a journey of college and career possibilities.

The ACP process consists of four key components:

- *Know—Who am I?*
- *Explore—What do I want to do?*
- *Plan—How do I get there?* and
- *Go—Do it!*

Throughout middle and high school, students view and update ACP documents. Completed academic and career plans are stored in the e-portfolio of Xello.

The Milwaukee Public Schools district strives to ensure that all students graduate from high school college and career ready. To provide our students with a wide range of experiences and opportunities to prepare for their future, MPS offers opportunities for students in the following areas:

- **Advanced Placement courses:** Students participate in college-level coursework and have the opportunity to earn college credit.
- **Career and technical education courses and student organizations:** Students participate in introductory to advanced courses and follow career pathways that prepare them for a wide range of high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers.
- **College and career readiness courses:** Students can explore areas of interest, including but not limited to entrepreneurship, business, computer science, culinary arts, and personal finance.
- **Dual-enrollment opportunities:** Students can earn college credit while they are still in high school.
- **International Baccalaureate courses:** Students participate in college-level coursework and have the opportunity to earn college credit.
- **Internships:** High school students work for employers for a limited period of time to learn about a particular industry or occupation. An internship is designed as an exchange in which the student agrees to complete work that will benefit the employer and, in return, has opportunities to learn new skills, expand their knowledge of a particular field, and explore career options.
- **Learning Journeys:** Students participate in educational field trips to put content-based instruction into practice. The Learning Journey emphasizes holistic learning objectives in career awareness (K3–grade 3), career exploration (grades 4–8), and career planning and preparation (grades 9–12).

- The **M³ (M-cubed) College Connections Program:** This innovative dual-enrollment program of Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), and the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM) allows eligible students to complete their high school graduation requirements while earning college credits from both MATC and UWM at no expense to the student.
- **Project Lead the Way:** MPS students gain the opportunity to explore STEM education—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—through a fully developed curriculum intended to stimulate interest in various fields of technology. PLTW offers curriculums for elementary school (PLTW Launch), middle school (PLTW Gateway), and high school (PLTW Engineering, PLTW Biomedical Science, and PLTW Computer Science).
- The **School-to-Work Transition Program:** Students with disabilities receive both social and vocational opportunities in real-world settings. The program focuses on abilities and on promoting and supporting the highest capacities of our students in their personal and professional development.
- **Youth apprenticeship programs:** Students participate in a work experience program in a chosen field.

Further information about these opportunities can be found in our MPS High School Course Guide.

ACP Scope and Sequence

The Milwaukee Public Schools' academic and career planning scope and sequence for kindergarten to grade 12 is designed to provide a comprehensive framework that supports students' academic growth, career exploration, and personal development. This roadmap ensures that students engage in age-appropriate progressive activities aimed at developing the skills, knowledge, and mindsets necessary for future success in both academic and professional realms. Beginning in kindergarten, students are introduced to foundational skills such as self-awareness and goal setting, which are expanded upon as they progress through each grade level. By high school, students engage in more specialized career exploration and academic planning, preparing them to make informed decisions about postsecondary education and career pathways. Below is the Milwaukee Public Schools ACP scope and sequence for each grade level.

- **K5–5th grade** **ACP Scope and Sequence – K–Grade 5**
- **6th grade** **ACP Scope and Sequence – Grade 6**
- **7th grade** **ACP Scope and Sequence – Grade 7**
- **8th grade** **ACP Scope and Sequence – Grade 8**
- **9th grade** **ACP Scope and Sequence – Grade 9**
- **10th grade** **ACP Scope and Sequence – Grade 10**
- **11th grade** **ACP Scope and Sequence – Grade 11**
- **12th grade** **ACP Scope and Sequence – Grade 12**

Milwaukee Public Schools has an ACP framework that is aligned with state standards and supports equitable opportunities for all students to achieve their full potential. The district's ACP framework is aligned with state standards and supports equitable opportunities for all students to achieve their full potential.

ACP Framework

Students Engage in ACP Activities Throughout the School Year in the Following Ways

In addition to the wide range of experiences and opportunities to prepare students for their future, all schools in Milwaukee Public Schools offer tailored ACP activities for students in the following areas:

- **Academic and career planning conferences:** Parents are invited to participate in an ACP conference with their child and the school counselor at **5th, 7th, 9th,** and **11th** grades to discuss their student's interests, skills, talents, transitional concerns, and postsecondary aspirations.
- **ACP Hour/advisory lessons in Xello (9th–12th grade):** Students access and complete ACP standards, lessons, and assessments that help them discover relevant college, university, trade, military, and career options based on their personality, skills, learning style, and knowledge. Students receive a 0.125 credit toward academic and career planning for their completion of work that results in a passing "P" letter grade.
- **School counselor classroom guidance lessons and the Comprehensive School Counseling Program:** Together, classroom guidance lessons and a Comprehensive School Counseling Program ensure a cohesive approach, equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to make informed decisions about their academic and career paths. Classroom guidance lessons help students develop skills such as time management, study strategies, goal setting, and organizational skills, which are essential for academic success. Counselors teach students how to create personal academic goals, understand graduation requirements, and select appropriate courses that align with their future aspirations.
- **K–8 classroom Xello lessons:** Students are exposed to different career possibilities through the exploration of the 16 career clusters, and they complete academic and career planning standards and assessments that help them connect their interests and skills to postsecondary options.
- **Graduation requirements:** The Milwaukee Public Schools graduation requirements are aligned with minimum requirements for the University of Wisconsin System colleges as well as most colleges and universities nationwide.
- **School-based academic and career plans:** These are created by the school-based ACP coordinator and their school-based ACP team to provide all students with two ACP activities per month, per grade level. The school-based academic and career plan is updated each academic year and provides tailored activities based on the school's focus (gifted and talented, information technology, arts-focused, career and technical education, etc.) as well as student career interest profiles in Xello and ACP targets.
- **9th grade UWM Learning Journey:** Offered to all 9th grade students in Milwaukee Public Schools, the UWM Learning Journey helps to raise postsecondary aspirations for college, provide college-readiness activities, and prompt student success for both high school completion and higher education.
- **10th grade MATC "Explore Your Future" Day:** Offered to all 10th grade students in Milwaukee Public Schools, "Explore Your Future" Day provides an extensive exploration of career pathways to students through hands-on learning experiences from Milwaukee Area Technical College pathway instructors and pathway students.
- **10th grade Career Day:** Career Day provides 10th grade students with a valuable opportunity to explore career pathways by engaging in hands-on experiences, industry exposure, and professional interactions. Through structured activities such as job shadowing, worksite tours, and career-focused workshops, students connect their academic goals with future career aspirations. By collaborating with businesses, community partners, and educational institutions, this initiative fosters career readiness and equips students with the skills necessary for long-term success.

ACP Staff Engagement Activities

All educators in Milwaukee Public Schools actively engage in the ACP process, either directly or indirectly. Staff engagement in academic and career planning plays a pivotal role in shaping students' futures by providing comprehensive support and guidance to all students. Staff engagement activities include the following:

- Required ACP school-based teams
- Required ACP plan
- Each educator has an account in the ACP software Xello
- **ACP Hour:** Teachers and paraprofessionals offer assistance with the Xello platform during ACP Hour to ensure that students understand how to navigate and use the system effectively for their career exploration and planning.
- **ACP conferencing:** School counselors collaborate with students on the development of student-led ACP presentations and guide the ACP conferencing process to help facilitate meaningful discussions with students and families about current academics and future academic and career pathways.
- **Data chats:** School counselors hold meetings with students to review academic performance, set goals, and develop personalized strategies for improving achievement and progress toward graduation.
- **Dual enrollment:** School counselors actively refer and assist students with applications for dual-enrollment programs, internships, youth apprenticeships, the School-to-Work Transition Program, and the M^3 College Connections Program.
- **Learning Journeys:** Teachers organize grade-appropriate Learning Journeys through the Extended Learning Opportunities office.
- **Monthly ACP activities:** All staff members participate in the implementation of monthly ACP activities, including the career speaker series, college campus tours and presentations, STEM/STEAM fairs, family literacy night, etc.
- **College and Career Centers:** College and Career Centers staff members provide assistance to students with both the college application process and the job application process, including but not limited to resume building, creating the cover letter, and general support with postsecondary readiness.

Additionally, teaching staff contributes to the teaching of specialized courses such as the following:

- **Advanced Placement (AP)**
- **International Baccalaureate (IB)**
- **Project Lead the Way**

Staff engagement, including completing the Xello Academy training and participating in the school-based academic and career planning team, allows staff to stay informed about best practices and tools for guiding students toward successful academic and career options.

School Counselor Required Activities by Grade

ACP Family and Community Engagement Activities

Family and community engagement is a vital component of effective academic and career planning, ensuring that students receive the support they need from both their school and home environments. Some ACP opportunities that engage families and communities include the following:

- **ACP parent brochures and parent letters** help to inform families about the purpose and benefits of academic and career planning.
- **ACP conferencing** involves families actively participating in discussions about their child's academic goals, career interests, and postsecondary plans as well as receiving and understanding the resources available to support their child.
- **Parent grade-level meetings** take place where parents district-wide can receive information relevant to the academic year, such as graduation requirements, career exploration tools such as Xello, college-readiness information, and general resources provided by the Milwaukee Public Schools district.
- The **Milwaukee Parent Institute** provides families with valuable workshops, information, and resources to support their child's academic and career development and encourages them to become active participants in the broader school community's efforts to prepare students for future success.
- **Monthly ACP activities** involve community engagement by partnering with local businesses, colleges, and organizations to provide students with real-world career exposure through presentations, informational sessions, and workshops.
- **Internships and apprenticeships** involve the community, providing students with opportunities to explore various career pathways through hands-on experience and guidance from experts within the field.

The Milwaukee Public Schools district has over 200 community partners that provide apprenticeship and internship opportunities to students, including Outpost Natural Foods, Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital, Milwaukee Catholic Home, the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Milwaukee Water Works, the Harley-Davidson Museum, Marcus Theaters, the Milwaukee County Zoo, and many more!

2018–2023 Progress

- The team created and developed a scope and sequence for ACP K–12.
- The team created a timeline of ACP activities to be implemented in the 2023–2024 school year.
- The Milwaukee Board of School Directors approved ACP graduation requirements.
- Created Xello completion standards for students in grades 6–12.
- Hired a district ACP coordinator.
- An ACP plan is required annually from every school.
- We developed a strong partnership with Building Advantage and WRTP to provide professional development opportunities to school counselors.
- The district ACP coordinator continues to monitor school-based plans and provide ongoing feedback.
- Graduation requirements include any combination of approved college and career readiness coursework totaling 1.0 credit (0.5 credit of personal finance is required as one of the college and career readiness courses).

Objectives 2024–2026

- Continue to implement our ACP scope and sequence that was developed in 2017 at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- Increase student-family involvement through ACP conferences at 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th grades.
- Increase the number of ACP teams from initiating to institutionalizing.
- Develop parent grade-level meetings to improve communications with families.
- Reinstitute/develop the district ACP team to improve collaboration and opportunities for students.
- Expand the Milwaukee Parent Institute and create alumni to engage families after they have completed the institute.
- Expand our youth apprenticeship and internship connections to provide more opportunities for students.
- Begin to build business partnerships beyond our youth apprenticeship program to provide career-based and work-based learning experiences for our students.
- Continue to develop opportunities for dual-enrollment courses through the partnerships with MATC, UW–Green Bay, and UW–Milwaukee.

Academic and career planning was an informational item shared with the board on September 12, 2024.
Updated E4E will be shared with the board on December 11, 2025.