

Academic and Career Planning (ACP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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ACP Basics

What is ACP?

Academic and Career Planning (ACP) is a collaboratively developed, student-driven process where students cultivate their own informed decisions for post-secondary success. Also known by some groups as [Individualized Learning Plans \(ILP\)](#), research on the benefits indicates that the ACP process increases student motivation, engagement, school connection, and awareness of individual strengths and weaknesses. Students utilizing ACP also improve their understanding of postsecondary options, better connect their goals to educational coursework and career goal activities, and engage in long-term planning for life after high school graduation.

The term ACP refers to both a process that helps students engage in academic and career development activities and an e-portfolio product that is created and maintained for the student's academic, career, and personal advancement. These student-owned planning and monitoring tools help students create personalized career pathway that is aligned with high school graduation requirements, personal interests, and individually-defined career goals.

Which students will participate in ACP?

All students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 in a public school district will participate in ACP. This also includes students with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs (IEP)/Post-secondary Transition Plans (PTP), as well as students with Section 504 Accommodation Plans, English Language Learners, students who are Gifted and or Talented, students who are homeless, and students considered neglected and delinquent.

Which schools are required to provide ACP services?

This is a requirement for Wisconsin school boards. Under Wis. Stat. § 115.28(59)(b) every school board will ensure that it is "providing academic and career planning services to pupils enrolled in grades 6 to 12 in the school district" beginning in fall 2017.

What are the process features of quality ACP?

Quality ACP features include alignment with current [PI26-Education for Employment \(E4E\) administrative rule](#) and the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model (WCSCM) with opportunities that incorporate self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning & management activities.

The ACP Model is KNOW-EXPLORE-PLAN-GO

KNOW- Who am I?

- Self-awareness, interest and learning activities & inventories
- Individual reflection and goal-setting

EXPLORE- What do I want to do?

- Career awareness assessments

- Career research
- Career-based learning experiences

PLAN- How do I get there?

- Connecting middle and high school instructional activities with opportunities to explore or learn more about a particular field of interest.
- Work-based learning opportunities
- Dual college credit courses
- Industry-recognized credentials
- Extra-curricular and community-based learning experiences
- Postsecondary training options
- Financial plan to cover cost of postsecondary training

GO- Do IT!

- Update regularly
- Adapt/Modify Intentional Sequence of Courses
- Adapt/Modify Personal Goals
- Adapt/Modify Postsecondary/Career Goals
- ACP Conferencing with families

How is ACP different from what I am doing now?

It may not be all that different from what you are doing now depending on how thoroughly you are implementing the current components of the [PI 26 Education for Employment \(E4E\) administrative rule](#) and the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model (WCSCM). ACP should not be viewed as another new initiative, but rather be considered part of an ongoing process of implementation, review, evaluation, and refinement as a district implements the components of college and career readiness. Furthermore, ACP reinforces similar requirements already in place for special populations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Career Technical Education Programs of Study required for federal Carl D. Perkins funding.

Are all students required to prepare an Academic and Career Plan?

Wis. Stat. § 115.28(59)(b) requires that beginning in the 2017-18 school year, every school board ensures that it is “providing academic and career planning services to pupils enrolled in grades 6 to 12 in the school district.”

Are students required to declare their career choice in 6th grade?

No. School staff, families, community members, and students should use the ACP exploration and planning process and activities to learn more about themselves and how their personal strengths and interests connect to future goals and potential careers. Frequent review and revision of a student’s choices and plan is encouraged as part of the ACP process to ensure more thoughtful decision-making related to future goals as they grow through middle school and high school.

What if a student changes their mind about their ACP goal(s)?

The premise of the ACP is for students to discover, learn, explore, and apply interests, skills and knowledge as they are acquired. Frequent review and revision of a student’s plan is encouraged as part of the ACP process to ensure more thoughtful decision-making related to future goals.

How does ACP relate to Education for Employment (E4E) and the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model?

The administrative rule requirements for ACP services and delivery indicated in 2013 Act 20 were included as part of an overall revision of [PI 26- Education for Employment \(E4E\) Administrative Rule](#) with opportunities that incorporate ACP required self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning & management activities.

The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model, although not required for school districts, is useful for setting accountability goals and developing or identifying standards-aligned curricula.

ACP Components

What are the requirements for ACP?

Requirements for Academic and Career Planning (ACP) services are outlined in the PI 26 Administrative Rule published on December 1, 2015. Delivery of services is defined by local school districts.

Who is required to deliver ACP services?

The Administrative Rule designates that the school board take responsibility to oversee and deliver ACP services. Districts should make efforts to incorporate ACP service delivery as an integral part of their overall college and career readiness strategic planning so that other educational efforts are leveraged and ACP responsibilities do not just fall on counselors to implement.

In order to realize the transformative potential of ACP, it will be critical that a district take a team approach that includes school board and administrative engagement involving representation from School Counseling, Career and Technical Education (CTE), Special Education, Academic Core Content staff, Parents, Student, and the Community at large. While school counselors will likely take a lead role, evaluation of the infrastructure and delivery of services cannot fall to them alone.

I am a school counselor. Is this my responsibility to implement?

While you will likely take a lead in ACP efforts, it will be impossible for you to shoulder a quality ACP program alone.

“In order to implement a comprehensive school counseling program, the ASCA National Model directs school counselors to coordinate opportunities to assist individual student planning to help students identify personal goals and future plans. This is an essential element and purpose of ILPs (ACP). It is especially important to note that school-wide implementation of ILPs should be coordinated by school counselors who are expected to have some expertise in career development; however, school-wide implementation should be coordinated among all or at least a team of educators...Relying on school counselors or other administrators with high student-teacher ratios will not allow for the level of implementation nor the quality of time needed to support [effective ILP implementation](#).” Source (<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/promoting-quality-individualized-learning-plans-throughout-the-lifespan-a-revised-and-updated-ilp-how-to-guide-2-0/>.)

I am an English (Math, Science, Social Studies, Music, Arts, Physical Education, etc.) teacher.

What is my role in the ACP process?

[Research](#) shows that “engaging in ILPs (ACP) has been found to be associated with students engaging in goal setting and becoming more motivated to attend school because it is perceived as relevant and meaningful. Students perceived that teachers were more encouraging and supportive. Teachers and parents perceived students as more engaged in school and more likely to

be taking more difficult classes and classes that were aligned with career and life goals. Students reported that engaging in ILPs resulted in stronger intentions to complete high school and matriculate to a postsecondary education or training opportunity.” Source (<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/promoting-quality-individualized-learning-plans-throughout-the-lifespan-a-revised-and-updated-ilp-how-to-guide-2-0/>).

If these outcomes are to be realized, it will be imperative from an ACP delivery capacity issue, that counselors alone cannot be expected to support all students, especially, when the average Wisconsin counselor to student ratio is 1:450. Moreover, student relationships with a consistent, supportive adult, outside regular classroom interactions, have been shown to increase motivation, reduce achievement gaps and behavioral issues.

The ACP coordinator and/or team in your district should support you for your role in the ACP process.

I am a Career and Technical Education teacher and already do career development. How does ACP impact me?

ACP is broader than specific technical skill development in a career pathway, however a CTE teacher’s experiences, knowledge, and skills are a necessary part of a comprehensive school or district ACP team. In partnership with school counselors, CTE teachers can assist to promote the value and inform other staff of the ACP process based on career pathways, post-secondary options, and community partnerships. CTE coordinators and teachers are often the ones that help students link academics and career interests through classes in which they can “try on” different broad occupational skills such as marketing, accounting, engineering, health care, and more.

The ACP coordinator and/or team in your district should support you for your role in the ACP process.

I don’t know anything about advising for career development. What do I do?

One of the misconceptions of ACP is that you must be a career advisor expert in order to assist students. On the contrary, ACP teams should take advantage of what teachers do best- asking questions and directing students to resources. While you may not yet be familiar with the ACP tools your district intends to use, the personal relationships you develop with students will support your efforts to connect their strengths and interests to their post-secondary plans. Furthermore, take advantage of externships and opportunities to learn more about how your content area subject is used in different occupations.

What role do families have in the ACP process?

Families are an integral part of the ACP process! Families are encouraged to review their child’s plan and discuss all of the component opportunities in order to help them make thoughtful decisions that align with their goals.–Students can start by sharing and discussing their Xello ACP plans with their families.

What is the community’s role in the ACP process?

From both a financial and staff perspective, it will be important to connect to other providers outside of school to ensure access to expertise and services that cannot be provided by the school alone. From occupational expertise; teacher externship opportunities; job-shadow, work-based learning, service learning and volunteer experiences; dual credit articulations; intensive social

interventions; and career development support from workforce development and economic development groups, the district ACP team should leverage common goals and partnerships.

Local and regional partnerships provide a means to collaborate and support mutual goals. Each CESA has designated an ACP Partnership Coordinator(s) to assist with these efforts, including connections to both the UW and Technical College Systems.

ACP Connections to Other Programs

How does ACP relate to the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Career Pathway?

Perkins V career pathway requirements have been informed by quality career and technical education processes connected to quality learning for high school transition after graduation. ACP is the process schools use to support career development with CTE courses taking serving to fulfill a role for career exploration. CTE course choices should align to current industry needs and continue to allow students to determine if a career pathway is appropriate for them.

What is the difference between the ACP and the IEP/PTP?

ACP is a state requirement, but not required by federal law. The IEP/PTP is a federal as well as a state requirement.

ACP is a process of connecting academics to career development that begins in grade 6. Engaging in ACP will result in an e-portfolio product which should be used to inform the student's IEP/PTP. Such information will inform annual goals, course of study, transition services provided, and post-secondary goals for students IEP/PTP's. The initial PTP is completed at the first IEP meeting after a student reaches age 14 in Wisconsin. Because the ACP and the IEP/PTP are developed for the individual student, the resources and services will be unique to each youth under both the ACP process and IEP/PTP development. Engaging in the ACP process will provide increased self-knowledge and resources to the student with a disability as they transition from high school to postsecondary school and employment.

How will the ACP work with a student's IEP/PTP?

It is important that students with disabilities participate in the ACP process in the same ways that other students do so that they have the same opportunities to explore career interests; access the same school staff expertise outside of the IEP/PTP team; and are not treated differently from the other students.

The PTP is the part of the IEP (I-8) that meets the federal indicator 13 requirements. A student's ACP is not equivalent to the IEP/PTP and cannot serve as a replacement. Rather, students will be better prepared to share their goals for the future with their IEP teams as a result of participating in ACP. The intersection can be thought of in this way; ACP gives students with disabilities an even earlier start on exploring options for future employment and the steps needed to accomplish their goals.

This is the case for two reasons. One, the student will begin the ACP process in grade 6, providing the opportunity for career exploration. Two, the student will already have ideas and artifacts from the ACP that can be applied to the PTP by the time they turn 14. Age-appropriate transition assessment, course of study, transition services, and individualized post-secondary goals for training and education and employment that are required for the PTP will align with information compiled within ACP. Will the ACP requirement result in duplication of work?

DPI anticipates that participation in the ACP process will add value to student and IEP decision-making related to planning for transition and development of the PTP. In addition, because the ACP process should involve all school staff, there is potential for improved cross-departmental staff collaboration, increased course-taking by students with disabilities in inclusive classes and increased exposure to career development experiences, resulting in more students with disabilities graduating with a standard high school diploma, attending post-secondary schools and obtaining competitive employment. Thus, the contents of the ACP will serve as an appropriate resource, based on student preferences, for the IEP team to use when creating, reviewing and revising the PTP.

Will this require another meeting in addition to the IEP/PTP meeting?

Not necessarily. The requirement for at least annual IEP/PTP team meetings will remain in place. Meetings with students and their families to discuss ACP will be held at the discretion of school educational teams assisting with the ACP process.

ACP Administrative Rule requires informing families at least annually about ACP services being provided to their student(s); provision of multiple opportunities to participate in the ACP process; and updates on ACP progress throughout the school year. While the ACP and the IEP/PTP are separate processes, fulfilling the requirements of both might not require separate meetings. IEP/PTP teams and ACP teams should collaborate to determine frequency of meetings, and the appropriate methods of communicating with students and families to fulfill requirements of both the IEP/PTP and ACP. It is recommended that ACP information be sent to families with the IEP/PTP to support understanding of the connections. Who will be assigned to work with students with disabilities on their ACP?

ACP service delivery should take place for students with disabilities in the same way as students without disabilities. Districts will determine who will be assigned to students and should be flexible enough to accommodate student needs on a case by case basis.

Will the ACP software coordinate with the IEP/PTP software?

While the ACP and IEP/PTP content are closely related and complimentary to each other as stated above, the ACP software “interoperability” with IEP/PTP software systems has not yet been determined.

At this time, it is planned that each district’s state ACP software system landing page will include a direct link to the DPI PTP software login page. It will be up to individual district staff to ensure that the components of ACP developed are incorporated into the IEP/PTP. DPI Special Education staff will be developing a software system field cross-walk

What is DPI-WEOP?

Targeting specific schools and districts, WEOP, or Wisconsin Educational Opportunity Programs, is a DPI team that works directly with school staff and students to provide college and career readiness programming. The DPI-WEOP team is housed in seven offices around the state of Wisconsin. The DPI-WEOP team provides federally-funded programming through Gaining Early Awareness Regarding Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), Federal Talent Search, and/or Upward Bound in our target schools. DPI-WEOP also provides outreach services, such as academic and career counseling, assistance with the college application processes, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and guidance regarding available financial aid.

While WEOP services are provided to specific target schools, school districts can connect to WEOP expertise for recommendations in developing further ACP services.

[View the WEOP Directory](#) for more information.