Academic and Career Planning
Pre-Implementation Year Evaluation

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Executive Summary
ACP Pre-Implementation Evaluation for DPI

Academic and Career Planning

Mission
Empowering all students to travel the road to adulthood through education and training to careers.

Vision
Re-imagining K12 education to equip students with meaningful and supportive adult relationships and the ability to adapt to opportunities and challenges on their personalized journeys to successful lives.

Key Findings
- Administrator buy-in is key to program success.
- Some teachers still resist ACP based on fears of increased workload and lack of expertise.
- Some stakeholders are uncertain and suspicious about the future of ACP, compliance, and monitoring.
- Students value ACP programming and want it to be rigorous, encompassing, and personalized.
- Students often do not see the full reach of ACP outside of dedicated ACP time.
- Family knowledge of ACP is generally low; families want to know what they can do to better support their children.
- Districts experience difficulties in sharing knowledge about ACP with local and regional businesses.
- Districts want to better understand and communicate about outcomes.

Evaluation Design

Evaluation Questions
1. How have last year’s pilot districts followed up on their activities?
2. What is the level of readiness across the state for ACP implementation in 2017-18?
3. What are students’ perceptions about ACP?
4. What are parent/family perceptions of ACP?
5. How are CESA partners serving districts around ACP?
6. What is the current state of ACP outcomes across the state?

Qualitative
- Focus groups
- Interviews

Quantitative
- Survey
- Baseline data

Recommendations
- Target communications toward school- and district-level administrators.
- Support districts in delineating teachers’ roles in ACP.
- Evaluate messaging strategies on compliance and monitoring.
- Help districts consider and incorporate student voice.
- Advise districts on how to stress the total arc of ACP programming and various methods of grouping.
- Develop materials and coordinate ongoing efforts to engage families.
- Provide resources to districts on working with local businesses.
- Provide resources to districts on collecting and understanding outcome data.

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Introduction

The following is the final report for the Year 2 (Pre-Implementation) Evaluation of Academic and Career Planning (ACP) conducted by the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC), Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Purpose of the Evaluation

In February 2016, DPI engaged the services of researchers at WCER to provide support and technical assistance for two and a half years (March 2016 to August 2018) for the ACP pilot and statewide implementation process. These services include two main aspects: technical support on professional development and training, led by personnel in WCER’s Center for Education and Work (CEW), and formative feedback via an evaluation led by evaluators at WEC. This partnership between DPI’s ACP team and WCER stemmed from the ACP Needs Assessment conducted by WCER personnel on behalf of DPI in the spring of 2015, the results of which informed the planning of DPI’s ACP pilot activities. The activities conducted during the initial phase of the evaluation focused on the ACP Pilot conducted in 25 Wisconsin school districts during the 2015-16 school year. Years 2 and 3 focus on further preparation for and the roll-out of statewide implementation.

Specifically, in Year 2 (2016-17) of the evaluation, WEC began looking at statewide readiness and preparations for ACP implementation to help inform DPI’s efforts to support districts’ preparations and implementation in 2017-18. WEC built upon the mixed methods evaluation that took place during the pilot year by following up with pilot district coordinators regarding their continued implementation work in order to better understand how their long-term plans were being implemented. On a statewide level, WEC looked at the extent of readiness for 2017-18 implementation and examined educators’ perceptions of ACP and their preparations for implementation. Student and family perspectives on ACP were examined to begin to understand these stakeholders’ needs. Professional development offerings and support by both the statewide Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) network and DPI were examined. Finally, baseline data was collected and analyzed on logic model outcomes in order to prepare for the outcome evaluation in Year 3 and beyond. Findings from this phase of the evaluation are also intended to inform the design of the Year 3 phase of the evaluation.

Evaluation Questions

The over-arching evaluation questions for the statewide pre-implementation evaluation are the following:

1. How have last year’s pilot districts followed up on their pilot year activities?
2. What is the level of readiness across the state for ACP implementation in 2017-18?
3. What are students’ perceptions about ACP?
4. What are parent/family perceptions of ACP?
5. How are CESA partners serving districts around ACP?
6. What is the current state of ACP outcomes across the state?
Methodology

To address these questions, WEC evaluators designed a study comprised of six components:

1. Telephone interviews of ACP district coordinators in former pilot districts
2. Survey of principals/building leaders
3. Telephone interviews with CESA ACP coordinators
4. Focus groups of educators attending ACP trainings in CESAs
5. Mini-case studies in 4 districts comprised of focus groups with students and, in some cases, interviews with parents
6. Outputs and outcomes data collection

Telephone interviews of ACP district coordinators

In November 2016, evaluators at WCER began contacting former ACP Coordinators from the 2015-16 Pilot Year Districts to invite them to participate in brief, follow-up interviews over the telephone. Of the 22 pilot district coordinators interviewed in spring 2016, 10 former pilot coordinators responded and participated in interviews. Three invitation emails bounced back for having email addresses that were no longer valid, most likely indicating that those particular individuals had retired or moved to other districts. One person agreed to an interview but was subsequently not available, and the remainder did not reply to the invitation. Participants in the 10 interviews, conducted from November 2016 to January 2017, were distributed across the original cohorts and represented districts from a variety of geographical areas, district sizes, and stages of implementation. Using a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A), evaluators conducted interviews that lasted approximately 30 minutes. Interview notes were coded and analyzed to identify themes and patterns, and a preliminary report was created and submitted to DPI in February 2017. Those findings have been integrated into this final report.

Survey of principals/building leaders

WEC evaluators developed and programmed a web-based survey in Qualtrics intended to gather information from principals of schools with any grades 6 through 12 statewide. The purpose of the survey was to gather information related to ACP familiarity and readiness for implementation across the state. Specific areas of interest were ACP infrastructure development; perceptions of ACP awareness in schools; perceptions of ACP buy-in; ACP professional development; the extent to which ACP service delivery is occurring; and the usefulness of ACP resources. WEC opened the survey on November 3, 2016, and DPI sent a link to the survey, via email, to 1,074 school principals. DPI sent a reminder to 1,224 school principals on November 15, 2016 that included principals missed in the original distribution. The survey closed on November 21, 2016. Of the 1,224 principals to whom the survey was sent, 357 responded to the survey and 280 completed the survey for a response rate of 29 percent and a completion rate of 78 percent. WEC submitted a preliminary report with findings to DPI in January 2017. Major findings are integrated into this final report, and the full survey report, including the survey instrument, can be found in Appendix B.
Telephone interviews with CESA ACP coordinators

ACP coordinators from all 12 CESAs were invited to participate in brief telephone interviews intended to describe the number and nature of ACP-related trainings offered during the school year, to help determine readiness among school districts, and to gather feedback on ACP-related communications and support materials developed by DPI and others. Despite numerous attempts, evaluators were not able to successfully schedule an interview with one of the coordinators, so ultimately, 11 of the 12 CESA ACP coordinators participated in interviews, which occurred between March 6 and June 2, 2017, and typically lasted for approximately 15 minutes. WEC interviewers audio-recorded the interviews and took notes while asking questions from a semi-structured protocol (Appendix C). Notes were later verified and augmented using the audio recordings, and subsequently were coded and analyzed to look for themes and patterns in the data and to highlight notable and representative quotes. A qualitative data memo was created based on the analyzed notes from all 11 interviews to compile findings.

Focus groups of educators attending ACP trainings at CESAs

WEC evaluators identified ACP-related trainings taking place at each of the 12 regional CESAs and obtained permission from CESA ACP coordinators to conduct focus groups of educators participating in those trainings, typically during the lunch break. Focus groups were conducted in all 12 CESAs between March 18 and May 25, 2017, and 73 individuals representing 63 different Wisconsin school districts participated. Most of the participants were school counselors or teachers of various subjects and grade levels, but other roles such as building and district administrators were also represented. Using a semi-structured focus group protocol (Appendix D), WEC evaluators conducted focus groups that lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Focus group discussions were audio-recorded, and the facilitator later used these recordings to verify and add detail to his or her notes. Notes were coded and analyzed to identify themes and patterns in the data and to highlight notable and representative quotes. A qualitative data memo was created based on the analyzed notes from all the focus groups.

Case studies of districts

Based on data from the principal/building leader survey, a number of schools and districts were identified for further investigation. A purposive sampling strategy was used to identify contexts where ACP was being implemented so that students and parents would be more likely to have perceptions and opinions about such programming. Survey respondents who volunteered to participate further, furnished contact information, and also met certain criteria regarding their school’s level of implementation were selected for potential participation. These criteria included having a designated time in the school’s schedule for delivering ACP services, inclusion of 76 to 100 percent of students in ACP services, and a high “readiness” score based on a sub-set of survey items that measured extent of implementation and buy-in among staff. Furthermore, former pilot districts were excluded from the sample to avoid over-burdening them and to enable evaluators to broaden their knowledge of districts’ ACP work across the state. Potential participating schools/districts were categorized by size and geographic location, and the principals were invited by email to have their schools/districts participate in the more in-depth investigation. Resulting case studies (n=4) involved a review of ACP practices and philosophy based on district website descriptions; discussions with ACP coordinators and/or principals; focus groups among eighth grade and/or eleventh grade students; and interviews with parents. Case study sites ranged in size as follows:

- A small rural middle school with approximately 200 students
- A small rural high school enrolling 320 students;
• A small town district enrolling 800 students in a combined junior/senior high school;
• A larger suburban high school with an enrollment of over 1,000.

Principals or their designees (usually school counselors) helped to recruit student focus group participants, and intentionally sampled to include students with a variety of interests, career focuses, GPAs, and demographic backgrounds. In total, evaluators conducted six focus groups with 20 eighth-grade participants, 30 eleventh-grade participants, and four twelfth-grade participants across all districts. Focus groups took place between March 7, 2017 and April 18, 2017.

School officials in case study districts also sent emails or other forms of communication to families of students in middle and high school inviting them to participate in focus groups. Response on the part of families was very limited, and parents were ultimately interviewed in only two of the districts (n= 4), on a one-on-one basis according to their availability.

All case study focus groups and interviews were conducted using semi-structured protocols (Appendices E and F, respectively), were audio-recorded, and notes were taken by facilitators/interviewers or the facilitator’s assistants. Focus groups and interviews were transcribed using the audio recordings. The transcriptions were then coded and analyzed to look for themes and patterns in the data and to highlight notable or representative quotes. District reports were then created and shared with case study district contacts as a token of appreciation for their participation. Feedback from leaders on these reports was very positive and enthusiastic (“I can’t thank you enough for the valuable resource you have provided by being a third party talking to our kids.” “Thank you! This is so valuable to me! I can’t wait to make updates to the program.”)

Outputs and outcomes data collection

To report pre-implementation baseline trends of ACP outputs and outcomes, WEC requested statewide, student-level data from DPI on June 2, 2016. In most cases, the data received include the 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 school years. For some measures, due to lags in reported data, data only include the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Output and outcome variables included:

• Outputs
  o Students taking advanced or honors courses
  o Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses

• Short-term outcomes
  o Attendance rates
  o Suspension rates

• Intermediate-term outcomes
  o Performance on ACT
  o Performance on ACT WorkKeys
  o Performance on AP exams
  o Dropout rates
  o Post-Secondary Enrollment by the first-fall after graduation

For each of these measures, the evaluation aligned calculations to similar practices used by DPI when possible. However, in some cases, our statistics will differ from those that are publically reported. This is due to variations in available data and differences in inclusion criteria. For more information on how WEC prepared and computed baseline statistics on each of these outputs and outcomes, refer to Appendix G.
At this time, the evaluation does not report any baseline of long-term outcomes associated with ACP as these will not be applicable for the next few years. Other outputs and outcomes of interest not included in this report include graduation rates, CTE participation rates, work-based learning participation rates, and ACP software usage. Future evaluations of ACP will include data on these measures.

Alignment between evaluation questions and data sources

Table 1 illustrates the alignment between the six over-arching evaluation questions and the six components of data collection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Question</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How have last year’s pilot districts followed up on their pilot year activities?</td>
<td>1. Interviews of former pilot ACP coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the level of readiness across the state for ACP implementation in 2017-18?</td>
<td>2. Principal survey; 3. Educator focus groups at CESAs; 4. CESA ACP coordinator interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are students’ perceptions about ACP?</td>
<td>5. Mini case studies – student focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How are CESA partners serving districts around ACP?</td>
<td>3. Educator focus groups at CESAs; 4. CESA ACP coordinator interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What is the current state of ACP outcomes across the state?</td>
<td>6. Outputs and outcomes data collection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Limitations

There are limitations to the extent to which the findings in this evaluation can be generalized. The small response rate (29 percent) for the principal survey suggests that findings should be interpreted with caution; it may be that many non-respondents are engaging less intensively in ACP activities than those who chose to report their work. While there was a cross-section of educators from across the state represented in the focus groups held at CESAs, by definition, those districts not yet engaging in any preparation for ACP implementation would not be represented at trainings. Generalizability is not typically a goal of case studies and other qualitative inquiries of limited scope, but rather, resulting data are used to help build theory, to identify future research or evaluation questions, and to inform future investigative strategies. Consequently, findings from the student and parent interviews should be viewed as very context-specific, but at the same time present ideas for future phases of evaluation.

All output and outcome measures provided in this report are contingent upon available data. Additionally, results on these measures should only be used for later comparison to outputs and outcomes related to ACP and should not be used for purposes that are more general. It is likely that results presented on these measures differ slightly than those publically reported by DPI due to differences in data availability and calculation practices. For all purposes other than ACP evaluation use, publically reported data from DPI should take priority in standing.
Findings

Evaluation Question #1: How have last year’s pilot districts followed up on their pilot year activities?

Progress on leadership and implementation plans

Overall, the respondents reported that their ACP work was progressing and going well. Districts mostly maintained their original ACP committees/teams, but in some cases expanded with new members such as additional teacher and other staff representatives, area university and technical college representatives, parents, local business partners, or chamber of commerce members. Three districts mentioned moving or having moved from district-based to school-based teams. Two districts formed additional ACP advisory committees that included local business members. All respondents were still serving on their ACP committees, but not all were still in the leadership/coordinator role, as several committees changed to being teacher-led; additionally, in one district, the former pilot coordinator left her school counselor position and became a district ACP coordinator.

In terms of whether districts continued to use their original pilot year plan, seven of the districts reported continuing with the same plan, and one district reported using the same plan but slowing their timetable down. Two districts mentioned having modified their plans—one reported “refocus[ing] ourselves and getting back to what is best practice instead of just putting out ideas because people just wanted to do them.” The other, a larger district with multiple middle and high schools, modified its plan by changing to school-based teams, each of which adapted its own individual plan. Five districts reported in the spring 2016 interview that they planned to delay one or more activities until this year. Of those five, one had delayed its schedule modification activities, a process which was not yet complete. One district pushed its gap analysis/needs assessment to this year, which it has since completed. Two districts have partially completed their delayed activities—a gap analysis in one case and Board approval of local ACP policy along with a written implementation plan in the other. The fifth district had delayed adapting a pre-existing scope and sequence, and then changed its mind and decided to develop its own, a project that was still underway.

Successes

Reported successes varied greatly, probably due to the various stages of readiness and implementation that these districts enjoyed. Three districts cited that they were holding ACP meetings or conferences with parents, and three deemed their ACP webpages and/or other communication activities to be a success. Three districts reported a change in the culture of the district marked by more buy-in and involvement in ACP. Two districts identified building ACP time into the regular school schedule and getting all teachers on Career Cruising as successes. Other successes included moving to school-based ACP leadership teams, completing the development of a scope and sequence, developing a system of career pathways aligned to high school course offerings, and being asked by other districts to share materials.

Challenges

As reported in the pilot year report, the most commonly cited challenge (6 mentions) was finding sufficient time to do all the ACP-related work, both at the planning and the implementation stages. In one district, finding time to deliver ACP services was seen as a challenge because the district had not been able to make scheduling modifications. Respondents also mentioned the lack of engagement or buy-in by some stakeholders. Two respondents mentioned lack of teacher buy-in, two districts reported
that parent engagement was a challenge, and one district was challenged by trying to coordinate with feeder schools from a variety of districts that had very different (or no) ACP provisions. One respondent mentioned having trouble getting principals to become involved, reporting, “[Principals] are really busy but they don’t have a clue, we can’t get them to come to meetings. They’re on the committee but they don’t show up.” One district also mentioned having some technical challenges associated with Career Cruising. As this respondent reported, “the Career Cruising people are nice and helpful but there are issues that are coming up, and no way for districts to communicate about how they are addressing these issues that come up.”

Here and elsewhere in the interviews, several districts expressed challenges related to finding ways to measure outcomes or “effects” of ACP on students. One respondent wondered, “How do you measure career based learning? How do you measure community learning experience?” Another respondent asked more generally how to know whether “what we are doing is having an effect on the students? We need more training on how to analyze results and write the right questions.” Similarly, one respondent believed that teacher buy-in would increase “once [teachers] realize students are more engaged because of the ACP process. But how do we measure that?”

**Scope and sequence, grade-level implementation plans and percentage of students being reached**

In terms of developing a scope and sequence for ACP activities, five districts reported that their scope and sequence was still in development, one reported having a completed draft that was being piloted, one reported that it had not yet begun, and three had completed the scope and sequence and were implementing it. Similarly, five districts reported that they were reaching 100 percent of students with full ACP implementation. Three districts reported that 100 percent of students were receiving parts of the ACP curriculum during the roll-out phase. One district reported having a grade-level implementation plan, which it was not yet implementing, as it had not decided on which software to use. One district reported that implementation had not yet expanded beyond the pilot schools.

**Professional development and resources**

All 10 districts reported that their staff were receiving professional development related to ACP. Five districts specified professional development around Career Cruising, which was delivered in a variety of ways: via CESAs, webinars, and train-the-trainer approaches. Districts were also providing professional development around ACP awareness, their curricula, and specific lessons. Some districts delivered this professional development on a building level, with building teams leading the training. One respondent reported that assistant principals in their district were responsible for training all advisory teachers and counselors on a building level. Other districts delivered their professional development at the district level, led by district teams. A number of districts have done so on both levels, and again, CESAs were mentioned as providers of professional development. One district reported that it had not done much professional development as its ACP implementation plan was in a “waiting pattern” while it chose a software system. Instead, teachers, who had been introduced to ACP during the pilot year and trained on both software systems, were creating materials on their own because, as the interviewee reported, they were “creative and progressive and want to do what’s right for kids” while they wait. One district mentioned that it altered its means of providing professional development around specific ACP lessons. Originally, it provided lessons to teachers to deliver to students over time, as needed according to the scope and sequence. However, the district realized “that didn’t work;” instead, it now provides teachers with “the entire year—the big picture,” communicating the intent of the lessons as well as providing resources so that the teachers can then “break it into chunks.” The district referred to this as “one big a-ha.”
Regarding DPI’s resources for ACP, seven respondents reported using a variety of materials such as the “checklist,” DPI’s website, the “My ACP Journey lesson,” planning documents, and rubrics, reporting that these materials were “very helpful,” “awesome,” “fabulous,” and “powerful.” Two respondents mentioned Career Cruising as an important resource. Three districts reported no longer using many DPI resources, as they believed they had moved beyond the need for them. One district reported that some of its schools found the DPI activities “really wordy” and that it took “too much to get through them all—the teachers just want the down and dirty—they are good lesson plans and they are super thorough but too much.” Only one respondent mentioned a useful additional resource, suggesting that a means to help parents and teachers understand workforce development data was necessary, as their understanding was “so important.” Seven respondents mentioned that the ACP conference, held in December 2016, was helpful. One interviewee reported that the conference was “much more warmly received than anyone anticipated.”

Collaboration and partnerships

Among these 10 districts, only one reported that it had not engaged in collaboration with other districts around ACP. Two districts mentioned collaborating via CESA counselor network meetings. Two respondents mentioned collaboration taking place during the ACP conference. Five districts mentioned collaborating via visiting other districts, hosting visitors, making presentations, and other forms of contact. One district described the county counselor consortium that it created with neighboring districts, which featured monthly meetings involving the sharing of materials and ideas.

In terms of forming new partnerships, only two respondents reported that they had not added any new partners to their ACP program. Five districts have forged additional partnerships with businesses, one of which developed a business advisory team, and another engaged in a program that allows high school students to gain authentic work experience along a number of different career strands. Another district added three area hospitals to its healthcare career pathway program. Two interviewees mentioned getting involved with area Inspire partnerships, one county-wide and one regionally organized, and another district reported creating new partnerships with area colleges. One respondent described attending a county-wide manufacturing group, but reported that it was

“hard to go to those meetings because they beat up on schools saying we’re not doing enough. Plus it’s expensive and kids can’t be out of school. Teachers and counselors from all over said, ‘[the manufacturers] need to back off, it’s not helping those relationships.’”

ACP software use

Interviewees were also asked about the extent of their use of Career Cruising or other software. Eight districts were using Career Cruising with students; some districts have used it for several years, while others are just beginning to onboard students. Most districts who gave access to students had also given access to teachers, but one district was still onboarding teachers and doing professional development around it while using it with students. One district was still onboarding teachers and had not yet given access to students. Two districts mentioned that more staff professional development was needed. One district had given access to parents, but discovered glitches and decided to temporarily “back off the parent portal” until the problems were addressed; its secretary, who was reported to be spending “several hours a day” on Career Cruising, was also tasked with fielding parent questions about the portal and it was too much work for her. Another district described having to “rein in the students” because teachers reported that sixth-grade students were “really excited about it” and were “very engaged” but the district did not have sufficient time allotted for the activities. Consequently, this district was adjusting some of its plans to address that issue. Finally, one district was testing both Career Cruising
and another product, and was having difficulty deciding which to use; the district felt that each had its various strengths and weaknesses. This respondent reported that Career Cruising was “very weak on assessments for kids” but that the other system had “some issues with attaching documents and being able to build that portfolio for kids.” The interviewee reported that the district planned to make a decision on software by February.

Additional Feedback

Interviewees were also given the opportunity to express any additional feedback they had about their ACP work. Most had little to add, but several expressed ideas on a number of topics. One interviewee reported that she would “love to know how many other school districts are looking at creating ACP school coordinator positions at the district level.” Another reported that the ACP updates from DPI were “overwhelming,” stating that “most staff don’t look at them, there are too many links,” although this respondent did not know what a solution to this would be. One interviewee expressed a desire for a place for districts to collaborate and “easily access examples. Something similar to the Google Drive that existed for the pilot districts.” Given the existence of the Google+ community, perhaps DPI needs to increase efforts to promote this resource. Finally, several respondents again mentioned the value of having an annual ACP conference, and reported that teams need more time to collaborate at conferences. This respondent believed that doing so approximated one of the values of participating in the pilot, which was “getting time to talk to other districts.” Another interviewee summed up the value of the ACP conference very succinctly, saying, “The areas where we’re weak we can learn; the areas where we’re strong we can share.”

Summary of Former Pilot District Follow-up Interviews

Although these 10 districts who had participated in the ACP pilot year worked in a variety of contexts, created and implemented plans in various ways, and met different challenges, they are similar in that they are all progressing with the plan, or a version of it, that they put in place during the pilot year. Although they listed several challenges, they tended to report that their successes outweighed their challenges, and that, as a whole, they were progressing well. Caution should be taken, however, when generalizing these findings beyond these 10 districts, as we cannot assume that the other former pilot districts are all enjoying similar outcomes. Nonetheless, these districts report progress, appreciation for the resources that DPI provides, and growing enthusiasm for the initiative, showing that DPI’s efforts in rolling out Academic and Career Planning are bearing fruit. The evaluation team will explore many of these findings further with the remaining data collection in this year’s study to develop a deeper understanding of both the successes and challenges districts face.

Evaluation Question #2: What is the level of readiness across the state for ACP implementation in 2017-18?

The principal/building leader survey results provided the majority of the data to address this question, but educator focus groups and CESA ACP coordinator interviews furnished additional information and perspectives. A summary of major survey findings is reported in this section along with relevant findings from other data sources; the full survey report dated January 27, 2017, including respondent principals’ school demographics and other characteristics, can be found in Appendix B.

ACP Infrastructure and Readiness

While 75 percent of survey respondents reported having an ACP leadership team in place, only 38 percent indicated that they had a staff position specifically for ACP. Those with teams most frequently reported that they met monthly (50 percent). In addition to leadership, the survey examined progress
on infrastructure components: a readiness assessment or gap analysis, an implementation plan, a communication plan, and a family engagement plan. The majority of respondents indicated that they were at least in the “In development” stage for these four components, with the implementation plan being the component at the most advanced stage.

Educator focus group data supported these findings, with most participants reporting that their school/district is in some stage of combined planning and implementation, but the range tended to vary with it, buy-in varied as well. One term suggested by a district was “reframing,” by which it meant that it was cataloguing and organizing existing ACP-related activities into its planning work, and communicating the whole as ACP or some other local branding term. This term seemed to resonate with other districts, who agreed that they were engaged in similar processes. A few participants mentioned that their districts were in the “pre-planning stages.” These were typically participants who were at the CESA to attend a beginning Career Cruising or ACP 101 program. There were also a few participants who reported that they were fully implementing, but in each case, they mentioned that they continued to tweak and look for ways to improve their systems.

These findings are supported by subsequent findings from interviews with the CESA ACP coordinators, who reported that readiness across districts varied greatly, with six interviewees reporting that their region’s districts range from just talking about ACP to being close to full implementation. One of these coordinators described her region as “one-third are ready, one-third will be ready, and one-third are scrambling and will not be ready” for implementation in the fall. Three CESA partners reported that on the whole, their regions’ districts have a low level of readiness, with one reporting that while high schools in her region were mostly implementing, middle schools were not. Finally, two CESA coordinators reported that generally, their districts were “very prepared” and “fairly well along.”

**ACP Awareness and Knowledge**

According to the survey, principal awareness and knowledge of ACP was generally reported as moderate to very high, while principals perceived that staff awareness and knowledge was somewhat low to moderate. Survey respondents also reported that students, in their opinions, had generally low levels of knowledge regarding ACP.

Survey respondents generally reported that knowledge of district ACP plans among stakeholders such as parents, local business communities, community organizations, and local postsecondary institutions was moderate to very low.

**Buy-In and Staff Engagement**

Survey respondents were asked to report their perceptions of the extent of staff beliefs about the value of a variety of elements of ACP, such as providing ACP for all students; having an ACP implementation plan; developing ACP infrastructure; ACP professional development; honoring all postsecondary options; and having a systematic, whole school plan for providing ACP. A majority of respondents for each element indicated that staff believe these items to have somewhat high or moderate value. The only exception was that 70 percent of respondents thought that staff held very high or somewhat high value in honoring all postsecondary options, not just four-year college, in their schools.

Buy-in can also be inferred by examining these elements in terms of district priorities. For all those items, a majority of respondents indicated a very high or somewhat high priority within their district. The highest district priority among these statements was honoring all postsecondary options, with 83 percent of respondents indicating that it is a very high or somewhat high priority. The lowest district
priority was ACP professional development, with 57 percent of respondents indicating that it is a very high or somewhat high priority.

Educator focus group data provided a deeper dive into the level of buy-in within districts. Like the survey respondents, educator focus group participants reported that the level of educator buy-in varies across districts and schools. Those districts that are just in the beginning stages of planning for ACP often reported that they have not communicated with their educators yet, preferring to “get all their ducks in a row first.” Across districts that are communicating with teachers, participants report that educator buy-in is fairly good, particularly in terms of the purpose of and rationale for ACP, but many report that the implementation plan is tougher to sell, as teachers fear a greater workload. This is, by far, the strongest reason for pushback, with a few participants mentioning that teachers feel there is no room in their curricula to implement additional (ACP) material, and some reporting resistance to changing to Career Cruising from some other software product.

Focus group participants from a number of districts report that buy-in is stronger among middle school teachers than high school teachers, usually attributed to the idea that high school teachers more often tend to specialize in a content area than do middle school teachers, and do not see ACP as part of their domain. In those cases and elsewhere, ACP activities are sometimes seen as strictly the domain of counselors and Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers. On that note, one counselor reported that she was concerned that many ACP training or other examples involve CTE courses and that a side effect of that practice is that core content teachers either do not feel included or feel like they are “off the hook.” As this participant noted, “core teachers might not understand how ACP fits [into a whole school program] if only CTE examples are presented.”

Some focus group participants reported that in their districts, they lack strong administrative support, and consequently, teachers will not buy in until they hear from administrators that ACP-related work is expected of them. A number of participants voiced the desire that DPI do more advocacy for ACP with district administrators and principals. Others mentioned that buy-in, both from administrators and staff in general, is the biggest issue facing ACP (“if admin doesn’t buy in, it will be hard to get buy-in from staff, no matter who is on the committee”). Funding was also seen as needed, with participants in several groups reporting that if there were funding available, they could hire an ACP coordinator, and without one, buy-in from staff would be reduced.

Educators in focus groups reported a variety of strategies that their schools or districts utilized for building general buy-in:

- Beginning efforts with enthusiastic teachers who help build consensus among peers;
- Making sure that the implementation plan is well developed before rolling it out to teachers so that they are not left to wonder what their roles will be.

In regard to having well developed implementation plans before rolling out to teachers, one participant stated, “you have to have that scope and sequence timed out step-by-step. You’ve got to make it as easy as possible,” for buy-in and a successful roll-out.

Reported strategies specific to addressing concerns about increased workload and teaching new content included:

- Emphasizing the amount of ACP-related work already being done in a school or district.
- Providing adequate professional development around fully-developed lessons that teachers are to deliver. As one participant reported, “If you don’t front-load that knowledge and make them comfortable with it, that creates frustration.”
• “Personalizing” the teaching aspect by having teachers incorporate their own career path stories into lessons.
• Leveraging what one participant termed “creative double-dipping,” or incorporating ACP-related learning into core content classes that satisfies an additional curricular need. An example given was to “get a writing standard done through a reflection on ACP.”

One educator focus group co-constructed a suggestion for helping to increase buy-in and participation among core content teachers. They suggested that if teachers were given strategies and examples or allowed to brainstorm ideas for weaving ACP into the regular curriculum, they would be less likely to view ACP as “one more thing.” This group believed such work might best be done at the various teacher association conferences, because this information would be more credible and palatable coming from content colleagues than from counselors or others outside the content areas. This group also suggested that it would be good to keep the focus on “why are we here?” because, as one participant stated, “the whole point of our job is to get these kids jobs later.”

Focus group discussion occasionally addressed potential negative perceptions of ACP, with one group discussing the danger that “K-12 education was becoming workforce development” and that if this were the case “then the credits and age of graduates should be changed (to 16) and the funding needs to be looked at.” One participant provided the example of a student who, by means of dual-credit, earned a two-year degree during high school. This outcome was described as “great for him, but financing for the district is hard.” Participants also mentioned the ideas of tracking and of the “pigeonholing of students in a career” and that “the thought process of a liberal education is that you aren’t mature enough to make those decisions (when you’re younger than 18).” Indeed, ACP has the potential to provoke conversations about the philosophies and purposes of education, and consequently it may be advisable that school and district leaders anticipate and provide forums for such discussions. Moreover, these types of questions often involve the very missions and belief systems of schools and districts, which serves to underscore why aligning a local approach to ACP with a school’s/district’s strategic plan is a best practice.

Similarly, educator focus group participants raised questions regarding the future trajectory of ACP work (“Where is ACP going?”), including what would come next, and whether ACP was one part of a bigger picture. One participant wondered whether and how often careers are updated within Career Cruising. Finally, one participant asked who on the state level was looking at the data for each school. This initiated a discussion among the focus group participants about monitoring and compliance:

CTE Teacher: I’ve been asking that question for 3 workshops at least. It was made very clear to me that no one’s coming from DPI with a white coat and check check check. What I have been told, you have to put on your website what you’re doing...

Social Studies Teacher: So that someone remotely sitting there in Madison can just check it. The mandate is to publish your board-approved plan on the website. And that way someone in some legislative or administrative office can go and do a quick check in that way.

Counselor: And then what?

CTE Teacher: That was a very important question for me, and that’s the answer I got. Will there be a higher level at some time in the future? I don’t know.
Counselor: At the last training, I heard that there would be something the CESAs would all be able to put on the website.

Although not typically discussed as thoroughly as in this group, a number of participants across the state wondered about compliance and monitoring, and occasionally questioned with suspicion the lack of clarity around it. DPI may wish to consider its communication messages and efforts around issues of compliance and enforcement.

Professional Development

Principal survey data show that a majority of respondents (52 percent) indicated that less than one-quarter of their staff received professional development related to ACP. However, 20 percent indicated that nearly all of their staff received ACP training. Likely, this gap results from a small portion of schools throughout the state who have started this process earlier than others have.

The type of ACP professional development provided to staff varied across schools. Of those schools that reported some form of ACP training, the most frequently employed delivery method was staff meetings (53 percent), followed by in-service days (44 percent) and CESA workshops (41 percent). Survey respondents also reported on topics covered in ACP professional development. Nearly half of respondents indicated that the professional development included an ACP overview or a software training. About a third of respondents reported professional development around an implementation plan, infrastructure or ACP roles.

Educator focus group participants talked about a variety of training and professional development opportunities that they had attended, including CESA trainings about Career Cruising and ACP more generally, DPI’s ACP conference, sessions at the school counselor conference, the special education conference, the career and tech education conference, and the WIOA conference. Participants also mentioned other resources used for training or to support training including the DPI’s ACP website, the ACP listserve, the LiveBinder, DPI in general, and the ACP staff at DPI. All of these trainings and resources were described as “helpful” by the participants.

Service Delivery

While full statewide implementation of ACP is not scheduled until the 2017-18 school year, many schools already provide ACP services. A majority of survey respondents indicated that their schools already provide access to ACP tools and resources; opportunities for students to engage in self-exploration activities to gauge their strengths, interests, and values; career exploration activities; and postsecondary education exploration activities. Two services that respondents indicated their schools are not fully implementing are dedicated time for ACP in their regular schedule (only 26 percent reported that nearly all of their students received this), and assigning students to an ACP coach, mentor, homeroom, or advisory teacher (only 40 percent reported that nearly all of their students received this).

Resources and Software

The last area of focus on the survey was ACP resources and software use. DPI provides a variety of ACP resources to the field, such as the DPI website, the Google+ community, the ACP blog, ACP twitter, ACP reflective questions, the infrastructure self-assessment, the Know-Explore-Plan-Go self-assessment, and ACP staff lessons. The survey asked respondents to evaluate the usefulness of these resources. In many cases, respondents were uncertain and responded with “Don’t know,” perhaps indicating that they did not know they existed or were not otherwise using them. In the cases where respondents knew how to rate ACP resources, respondents rated DPI’s website as the most useful resource (43 percent indicating
extremely useful or very useful). The least useful resource appeared to be the ACP twitter (6 percent indicating extremely useful or very useful), though there was also a high degree of uncertainty with 62 percent indicating “Don’t know.”

Similarly, educator focus groups discussed ACP materials that they had used, as well as their usefulness. Participants mentioned a number of “helpful” resources they had used to support their ACP planning and implementation, including:

- **DPI materials**
  - Videos
  - Planning tools and templates
  - Know, Plan, Explore, Go chart
  - Infrastructure plan
  - Student activities plan
  - Card sort activity
  - Listserv
  - Implementation timeline
  - Powerpoints
  - Website
  - Info about the administrative rule
  - Webinars

- **Materials from DPI’s ACP conference**

- **Career Cruising materials and lessons including**
  - Completion standards
  - Activities recommended by DPI
  - Occupation outlook handbook
  - Suggested activities per grade level

- **Materials from other districts and schools, particularly New Berlin and Sheboygan South, but also Mishicot, Pewaukee, West DePere, Wausau, Milwaukee, Fort Atkinson, Whitewater, and Wisconsin Rapids**

- **CESA materials**
  - Graduation and completion rates from various post-secondary schools
  - Scope and sequence
  - Checklists

- **Materials from other states including Washington, Nebraska, and South Carolina**

The vast majority of feedback on the usefulness of the materials was very positive, particularly regarding materials from DPI and from other districts. One participant reported that some DPI materials “get a little wordy and fancy with the colors and a little distracting at times.” She felt she could communicate the information in the “Know, Explore, Plan, Go” piece “in a much more simplified way.” Participants also reported that districts have been very willing to share materials to help others from having to “reinvent the wheel.” More feedback on DPI materials is included in the findings for Evaluation Question #5, below.

To inquire about ACP software, the survey asked respondents how far along, or at what stage they are, in adoption. A majority of respondents (55 percent) indicated that they are either continuing with their current system or have a new system in place. Of those without a system in place, many are in the process of switching to a new system (20 percent of all respondents).
Nearly all respondents (93 percent) indicated that they use Career Cruising as their ACP software. The other software used included CareerLocker (3 percent), Naviance (3 percent), a combination of Career Cruising and CareerLocker, and Inspire (less than 1 percent each).

A number of participants from educator focus groups offered feedback on Career Cruising, with one group specifically mentioning the need for opportunities to provide such feedback for improvement of the software. One participant reported that it was difficult to download documents from Career Cruising (“the formatting gets all weird”) and that it would be useful to be able to alter certain Career Cruising activities for local uses. Another participant added, “It’s a great program but I wish it could be personalized.” Another group discussed issues with differentiation in Career Cruising, saying it “caters more to the middle” but needs additional resources for “gifted to advanced learners” and special education students in order to truly engage all students. One participant reported wanting access to the elementary-level Spark! version to use with certain non- or low-reading students, but was disappointed to learn that Spark! is not available through the state contract. This participant reported having inquired about purchasing licenses for approximately 10 students but was not able to do so unless her school bought licenses for the entire school body. As a result of this discussion, this particular focus group’s participants raised questions of access for all and the issue of “partially-funded mandates.”

Evaluation Question #3: What are students’ perceptions about ACP?

Data from the case studies, specifically the student focus groups, were used to address this evaluation question. As stated previously, the four districts and five focus groups represent somewhat of a cross-section of state schools in terms of district size and context (rural, suburban). However, due to the limited number of cases and the purposive sampling strategy, caution should be used when generalizing these findings. Nonetheless, these findings do illustrate perceptions and attitudes and raise questions that future evaluations and/or research may wish to investigate further.

Extent of student engagement

In the four case study districts, students reported that all students (in terms of all grades in a school and by sub-group) participated in ACP activities. (Again, a criterion for a school’s/district’s inclusion in the case studies was universal ACP participation.) Moreover, these focus districts all had regularly-scheduled periods partially or completely devoted to ACP activities (such as advisory or homeroom, though they were typically branded by the school or district, e.g., ACP Mondays, Life Options class), in which the whole school was involved contemporaneously. In such cases, it may be easier or more efficient to involve “all students” than in schools or districts who do not deliver ACP in such a manner.

Purpose of ACP

When asked what students knew about ACP and its purpose, focus group participants across districts and grades tended to have similar responses. Students all provided answers related to preparing for one’s future, typically “after high school” or “after college.” Individual responses included, “It helps us know what’s next,” “it keeps you on track,” “to prepare us for what we’re going to do in the future,” “it helps you take the right high school classes for college.” When students mentioned that the purpose was to help prepare for college, facilitators asked if ACP was strictly meant for college preparation. Students then clarified that other post-secondary paths were possible as well (“it prepares us for life, too”). In fact, in one district, students were very mindful of vocabulary, telling interviewers that “because not everyone is going to college, you say what your plan is.” In all four case study districts, students made it clear that ACP served all students regardless of whether they were planning to attend
a four-year college; indeed, a number of participants in each group had plans that did not involve four-year colleges, at least immediately after high school.

Students tended to agree with the purposes and rationales for ACP that they reported, though some qualified their agreement, with statements such as “it’s boring but it also helps.” Some eighth graders agreed with the overall rationale of ACP, but felt that eighth grade might be “too early” to participate. In these cases, students did not tend to be familiar with the full multi-grade arc of ACP services, and did thus not see ACP as a building continuum of activities. As one eighth-grader mentioned, “I think it’s nice that we do [ACP] early on, because we can think about it more, but I hope we can do it again in high school.” Consequently, this may suggest that it is important that schools/districts make students and other stakeholders aware of the trajectory of ACP-related activities across the middle and high school grades so that they can better understand the larger context and their roles in it.

**Value of ACP activities**

While students overall tended to agree with the rationale for ACP, their opinions were much more divided about the value of individual activities. Participants described a wide range of activities – all groups mentioned interest surveys, career exploration activities, Career Cruising, and interactions with school counselors. Other activities mentioned in one or more districts include career fairs, college visits, ACT preparation, resume writing, college exploration, personal finance courses, guest speakers, course selection, Junior planning meetings, access to Youth Options and Youth Apprenticeships, community-based projects, and grade monitoring. Perspectives varied as to how valuable and how enjoyable different activities were. While as a whole, eighth graders tended to report that interest inventories were “not helpful” or that results were not “accurate,” high school students tended to have a wider range of opinions on interest inventories and similar surveys. Some reported that they helped them “find careers I didn’t know about” while others found them a “waste of time” or “extra work” because they “already know what [they] want to do.” Similarly, Career Cruising was generally seen as valuable by eleventh graders (“Career Cruising is actually how I found the name of the occupation I want”), particularly career exploration activities (“you can search the career and then it tells you more about it and you get to watch videos and stuff”). Eighth graders, on the other hand, tended to associate Career Cruising strictly with interest inventories and other surveys, and thus tended to find it less valuable.

Work around so-called soft skills, which one student characterized as “being on time and how to get along with other people,” were less often seen as valuable and typically described as “boring.” Many students saw ACT test preparation as valuable, although some noted that it was less valuable for students not planning to go to college. Resume-writing, mock job interviews, and personal finance tended to be cited as valuable and helpful. In those schools where such activities were not provided to all, but instead were included in elective business classes, students often expressed that they wished they could have access to them.

Eleventh grade students often mentioned the value of opportunities such as youth apprenticeships and other hands-on career exploration experiences as particularly valuable, but at the same time, many expressed that there were not enough opportunities for them. Many eleventh graders expressed that college visits were valuable, and in districts where these did not occur, students tended to wish that they did. In schools where college-related planning did not take place during ACP time, but rather on an individual basis with school counselors, many students wished that these activities could be incorporated into ACP time. In fact, some expressed the belief that their school’s ACP program lacked these activities precisely because they did not occur during ACP time, even though the students had engaged in them, another indication of the importance of clear communication of a school’s/district’s comprehensive ACP program.
Regardless of post-secondary plans, many students seemed to want more guidance and instruction on how to connect their interests to career preparation and other “real-world issues.” One student described wanting ACP to support “the steps to get to your career, not just what career you want to pursue.” Another student summed it up, saying she would like ACP to include, “the step missing between your interests and what you want to do, the whole path, I guess.” In a group of seniors, a discussion occurred about what the focus of ACP time should be, particularly toward the end of high school. This discussion merits reporting verbatim as it is filled with suggestions neither prompted nor interrupted by the researchers, revealing a level of engagement with the topic not typically seen among student focus group participants:

*Student 3:* I think we should focus more on the actual life aspect and not so much on postsecondary. That is very useful, but…

*Student 4:* What he said.

*Student 3:* I feel like they didn’t focus enough on it. There’s a lot more stuff that’s out there that we can learn. That would maybe not just make senior year really useful, but sophomore and freshman year. I understand that junior year, you’re focusing on the ACT, but just make other years valuable also.

*Student 1:* Yeah, there was a lot going on all at once this year…junior and senior year.

*Student 4:* Which makes sense, because we’re closer to (being done)…

*Student 2:* For the last two years, I feel like we should separate the whole class into groups on what we want to do after high school, and then talk to those groups specifically on what they want to do. College group, tech school, military—have a teacher experienced in that field and they’ll talk about it and explore different options.

*Student 4:* Can I add to that? It would go by class. Once a month, have a presentation, and all of the kids go to different rooms and they can actually hear about what they want to do.

(…)

*Student 3:* Maybe adding on to that – start separating after the ACT for junior year.

*Student 1:* This year, at the beginning of the year (…) our World of Work coordinator made it an option for kids that want to go into the World of Work to be taken out of their [ACP] class and put into that one. It would be cool if they have kids that specifically know that they want to teach, or go into science, just make it more…

*Student 2:* Meaningful.

*Student 1:* Yeah, I guess. Give us opportunities to coordinate with each other and talk about it. I think that they should make [ACP class] more student-based or maybe even student-led, because they just seem to have all of these ideas for us, but most of them aren’t really relevant to our lives. We just go through the steps and it doesn’t mean anything to us.

This rather lengthy exchange of student ideas is notable in that participants built off each other’s ideas, co-constructing a vision of an ACP course that would be more rigorous, more varied, and in particular, more relevant to a broader range of real-life concerns. Thus, regardless of whether a school/district determines that a dedicated ACP course is appropriate for its context, these data suggest that however
ACP services are delivered, students attach importance to authenticity and attention to real-world concerns.

**Dedicated time in schedule for ACP delivery**

In terms of the value of dedicated ACP time itself, opinions varied widely, but often seemed to correlate with the level of organization or perceptions about the preparedness of teachers to lead these class times.

In one district where high school students self-selected between several career cluster-based academies for their dedicated ACP time, several students felt that the “advisors” in the various academies were not assigned according to their expertise:

“I actually want to go into psychology but I’m in [the] Human Services [academy] and the psychology teacher is not my advisor and I feel like he should really be...they’re not lined up as well as they could be.”

“One of our Spanish teachers, which is helpful if you want to do like a Spanish minor for the field, for the medical field, but yet, is it really helping us a whole lot? Her input, it hasn’t really.”

“What really helped more is I talked to one of my FFA (Future Farmers of America) advisors about what I want to do.”

In this particular case, students perceived that the teachers affiliated with the various academies and referred to as “advisors” should have expertise in those career areas. While this structure very well may not be feasible in all high schools, it is perhaps important to note that terminology selected to refer to teachers as they work in these capacities may influence student expectations about what teachers’ roles and capabilities are.

In another high school, students described how their ACP-dedicated advisory sections varied in terms of preparation and organization, which students were aware of from “talking to each other.” One student reported that in their section the teacher “didn’t have us do most of the stuff we were supposed to do.” Students in this focus group suggested that a more efficient organizational structure might involve pairing teachers to lead ACP time: “That way they could hold each other accountable. Co-teach or make the teachers accountable for having materials in their classes.”

Students were also asked whether, given the choice, they would opt to do ACP time. In one district, all students answered that they would. However, several noted that they could only know this in retrospect. Similarly, in another district, students expressed a variety of opinions, with many saying they would not have taken it, but looking back, they were glad they did because they “learned a lot.” In another district, students reported that they wished it were optional, so that those students who “didn’t care” about ACP would not take it and those who did would get more individual attention. Across districts, students generally agreed that ACP courses and activities became more valuable as they progressed through school.

**Mentoring relationships and other interactions with adults**

Students across the four districts mentioned talking to a variety of adults, including ACP advisory teachers, counselors, classroom teachers, speakers at career days, parents, older siblings, and other relatives. In every focus group, students talked about the importance of school counselors, particularly in terms of their one-on-one interactions with them. This finding, as well as the findings related to the teaching of ACP time, suggests that adult interaction is indeed important to students. In one district,
students talked about the importance of talking with counselors as well as other trusted adults. One student reported, “I actually asked my aunt who’s a doctor, and she gave me ideas of what classes [to take]. And then I went to student services to help suggest classes.”

Additionally, eighth graders reported looking to parents and sharing information with them more frequently than did eleventh graders. Juniors’ ACP-related interaction with parents ranged from no interaction (“my parents expect me to figure out what I plan on doing on my own”), to occasional interaction (“I only talk to [my mom] when I need to about stuff, other than that not really”), to direct involvement in ACP-related activities (“my mom called and set up an appointment with a psychologist so I could talk to him about what it’s like;” “my parents helped me set up a ride-along day with a vet to the different farms after I told them I wanted to work with animals.”) Perhaps not surprisingly, this range of interaction levels was also reported by the parents interviewed (see Evaluation Question #4, below).

Suggestions for improving ACP

Finally, students offered a number of suggestions for how to improve ACP delivery in their schools/districts. In all focus groups, students suggested that it would be helpful to have (more) guest speakers who came in to schools to speak about their careers. In several focus groups, students expressed a desire for more rigor and accountability. As one student reported, “we could have learned more, [the teacher] could have given us more to do. It went too slow.” In another district, one student said, “I would make it so we only do things that are beneficial. Avoid the Kahoot, all the games, all the stupid stuff we do. Make it better, more educational.” Another added, “Focus on the unit.” Still another added, “Don’t take stuff from past years and put it in the present. Keep on updating the plans for it.” Another junior elaborated, “Spend more time actually working on stuff that matters. Explore more options for people instead of just pushing for college.”

Another group even suggested the inclusion of a course exam. One student said it would be valuable to have “one test at the end of the year, so you go over everything you learned.” When asked what the test would accomplish, another student said, “You would review what you learned and make sure you really know it.” In another district, eighth graders were in agreement that their ACP time should be more frequent (it occurred once every two weeks) and there should be more programming and activities involved, instead of allowing students to sit and talk and do other homework when their ACP-related activities were completed. Eleventh graders in the same district wished there could be more opportunities to speak to people in related careers, and to meet with teachers “one on one every now and then.”

In addition to these specific suggestions, when students described suggestions for improvement, they generally indicated preferences for less structure and more personalization. One student suggested, “Make it some way so it’s more oriented to, not just a specific job, but like a group.” Another student added, “Have it reach different types of kids, have an option, for a broad variety of kids, and different plans, just have a better variety.” Although students in this group may have struggled to describe their vision of ACP, they consistently alluded to the idea of variety and, by extension, a more personalized approach to planning. Indeed, several students reported that if ACP were more tailored to their specific needs, the activities would be more beneficial.

Evaluation Question #4: What are parent/family perceptions of ACP?

As mentioned above, parent interviews in this study were extremely limited. In three of the focus districts, principals and other school personnel attempted to arrange focus groups or interview opportunities, but had great difficulty finding parent volunteers. In the fourth district, the principal
determined that interviewing parents would not be worthwhile, as the district had not yet put any effort into communicating ACP. Of the three districts that attempted to arrange for parents to be interviewed, only two were successful. In one, a larger suburban district, only one parent, who was also a school board member, participate. In the other, a small rural district, three parents who were also middle or high school employees were interviewed individually. Consequently, these findings probably cannot be generalized in any way, and should instead be used primarily to inform future evaluation activities in this area, both in terms of formulating evaluation questions and planning methods of evaluation, particularly sampling and recruitment.

In the suburban district, the parent who was a school board member was very informed about the district’s ACP programming, and was also a strong advocate for it. He was aware of the history of the program, how it had developed, and how it was being funded. He discussed his perceptions about the importance of creating an ACP culture and involving parents:

“I think...creating an environment and culture is so important. That has to happen from the top down and the bottom up. I think it’s so important that we get parents involved and get them thinking about this, and that they know they’re supported, and that this has to be done over and over. It’s not good enough to do it senior year—you need to be thinking about this day in and day out. That’s what [the district’s ACP time] does—it gets you thinking on a regular basis. It’s second nature. I’m going to be going on to postsecondary education (we don’t say college anymore, we say postsecondary). Having the nuts and bolts in place to support this from day one. Finding ways to get parents involved. Giving them tools to help them talk to their kids. If Choice A doesn’t work out, we’ll help you do Choice B. A plan and a backup plan, thinking into your future, what’s important to you, and playing to your strengths.”

In the small rural district, evaluators interviewed three mothers of eleventh-grade girls, all of whom had participated in the student focus group. Even though all three adults were employed by the school district (as a middle school teacher, an elementary school special education assistant, and a high school food service worker), their understanding of ACP was fairly limited. One parent understood ACP to be

“It’s [the students] picking their classes, in junior and senior year, and like some of them can count toward college credit and some of them not, and then building themselves up to what they want to be in the future for when they go to college.”

Another parent characterized as ACP as “It’s looking at what kind of tracking they go to to help them be ready for their career.” The third parent reported that she had “no idea.” From what she had read, she said it was “basically, along the lines of what we need to know for our kids’ future and stuff like that.” These parents were unaware of what grades participated in ACP, but assumed that at least juniors did so, since their daughters (each juniors) were involved in some way.

Asked whether they felt ACP, as they understood it, was beneficial, one parent said,

“It seems like it is, although now she’s like I don’t know if I want to do that anymore. Her plans are changing so I don’t know, I mean I’m thinking she might change, so it’ll kind of be beneficial if she goes for what she picked and if she goes for something else, it’s obviously not going to be so beneficial.”

Similarly, another mother reported,

“I think it’s a good thing, but I think it’s hard for them at their ages to decide because I think of when I went to college there were a lot of kids that still didn’t know what they wanted to do.”
In other words, these two parents had impressions that ACP would be beneficial only if students knew what career path they wanted to follow and did not change their minds during high school. In fact, one mother was asked whether, if her daughter changed her mind in her junior year about “what she wanted to do,” she could change her ACP plan during high school. This parent replied, “That I don’t know. I’m hoping she would know.”

The third parent felt it was a worthwhile program, but that she did not get enough information about it. She believed that she was supposed to have a role in ACP, but that without a checklist or timeline, she was not able to keep track of her ACP responsibilities as a parent.

None of the parents were able to name any ACP activities that their students had engaged in, although one parent mentioned that her daughter shared her portfolio with her. One mother reported that her daughter “talks to [her] a lot” but was not aware of her daughter engaging in any of a number of ACP-related activities that the interviewer suggested.

The parent who was a middle school teacher was aware of some ACP activities in her school, reporting that “the guidance counselor meets with the kids and kind of gives them surveys, sees what their interests are, they research some of the careers.” She also reported that her eleventh-grade daughter was interested in a four-year college, and was researching “what kind of classes she needs in high school, if she has to take Spanish or not, what kind of qualifications there needs to be” such as GPA and ACT scores. However, this parent was fairly certain that her daughter was doing this research on her own, and not as part of ACP programming:

“I’m not sure, maybe they’ve had conversations with her and that’s why she’s doing it. Or, like I said, I don’t necessarily always...Well, they’re in high school and they’re kind of more independent and they don’t tell you everything. And they don’t send you stuff home because they shouldn’t have to at that point.”

In all three cases, parents reported that they were not very informed about what their high school children were doing in regard to ACP, but their opinions varied on how much or what kind of communication they should receive. One parent reported that whatever her daughter chose to tell her would be sufficient. Another said “it would be good to know” and the third wanted more information in the form of checklists and timetables.

When asked whether they would like to be more engaged in the ACP process with their students, these parents also had varied opinions. One parent thought it would be “very useful” because “you’re going to have parents from a wide range of, whether a technical college or a parent whose kid just went to work in the factory.” Another felt that she would prefer just to talk to her daughter as much as the daughter chose. This same parent, whose daughter was researching colleges, reported that she had “not gone to any of the...college nights, and some of those things are coming up, but we haven’t participated in any to really say one way or the other.” The third parent was undecided about parent engagement, saying it would depend on what it would entail. She explained, “I don’t want it to be like, do this, this, this...and then my child feels like, oh, you’re the one that made me do this. I want her to be able to make her own options.”

Other than increased communication (in some cases), these parents had no suggestions for improving ACP, as they felt they did not know enough about it. As one parent reported,

“I don’t really have much of an opinion at this point, because I’m still going through the process right now. Ask me after my daughter’s gone through it all. We’re just really getting started on it right now, she’s a junior right now so she’s just starting to look, and really focusing on where she
wants to go and what she wants to do. But right now, she’s just at that point, she just took the ACT. So maybe when the ACT scores come back, that’s when things will become more real."

To contextualize the perspectives of the three parents from the small rural district, it should be clarified that the high school was implementing ACP fairly extensively, with a wide range of activities, counseling, and regular ACP delivery in advisory that took into account many possible postsecondary plans. Thus, one take-away is that parent understanding of ACP programming cannot necessarily be assumed, even among parents whose students are quite involved (as these students were, based on what they reported in the student focus group). Therefore, a thorough communication plan is advisable, probably with multiple means of disseminating information. Secondly, based on the variety of perspectives on parent engagement from these three individuals, it should not be assumed that all parents are interested in or willing to become engaged in their students’ ACP process.

These are issues that bear further investigation, and future evaluation efforts likely should delve deeper into issues of parent engagement and communication preferences. However, strategies for better sampling parents and engaging them in related evaluation efforts will need to be considered, as parents across these four districts proved very hard to reach, even when invited directly by their children’s schools.

**Evaluation Question #5: How are CESA partners serving districts around ACP?**

To address this question, analyses of the data from both the CESA ACP coordinator interviews and the educator focus groups were used.

**Number of trainings and extent of district engagement**

Across the eleven CESAs from which ACP coordinators were interviewed, interviewees reported that a total of 77 ACP-related trainings were delivered/scheduled for the 2016-17 school year. The number of trainings per CESA varied, and the methods of delivery varied. With one exception, all CESA partners reported having conducted at least three trainings, and one CESA had done more than 30, the majority of which were single-district, on-site trainings.

At the time of the interviews, the percentage of districts involved in one or more trainings ranged from 42-100 percent per CESA region, with an average reach of 78 percent of districts. However, a number of trainings had not yet taken place, so the reach could be assumed to surpass that number by the end of the school year.

While some partners reported that there are districts that have not yet attended any trainings at the CESA, a number of those have been trained in-district or virtually, usually due to geographic distance and/or the difficulty educators have finding substitutes so they can leave their buildings. Many of the CESA partners reported that they have had contact with all districts on some level regarding ACP. Means of having contact with districts included the following:

- doing presentations within districts;
- reaching out by phone and/or email;
- providing superintendents with menus of the ACP services the CESA provides;
- presenting at PAC meetings;
- identifying district ACP leads and sending them surveys;
- approaching personnel through the school counselor network; and
- creating a list of those not engaging so a specific training can be developed for them in the fall.
Several interviewees reported that districts that are not engaging usually have only one person, as opposed to a team, trying to do ACP planning or that no one is taking ownership at all. These are typically very small districts with limited capacity. Several CESA partners reported that if superintendents or other leaders have not “jumped on the ACP bandwagon,” this inhibits progress for a school or district team. Many interviewees expressed the importance of administrator buy-in to make ACP happen locally.

**Nature of trainings**

In terms of the nature of trainings delivered, CESA partners reported that many focused on Career Cruising, but other subjects included ACP 101; Planning, Infrastructure, and Team Worktime; “Moving Forward;” and trainings around preparing PI-26 communications, developing scope and sequence, and logic modeling.

Educator focus group participants called out some elements of CESA trainings that were particularly helpful:

- ACP 101 trainings, and similar overviews
- Team work time
- Opportunities for sharing and collaborating with other districts
- Career Cruising trainings, especially the in-depth trainings after participants have had time to dig into the tool
- Resources and examples of activities

Focus group participants also reported some less helpful or problematic elements of trainings, but also offered suggestions for improvement. Career Cruising training was often reported as going “too fast,” especially for those with no familiarity with the tool. One participant reported that Career Cruising training on the student version was too simplistic or obvious (“‘If you want to see the journal, you click the tab that says, My Journal.’ Come on. We don’t need to be told that.”) At the same time, other participants reported that much of the information was shown too quickly for trainees to remember, but that it was intuitive enough to be able to figure out later. Several group members felt that the CAMS element warranted more attention and that this should be the focus during trainings. One participant suggested that it be incorporated with much-needed worktime so that trainees could,

> “do it (at CESAs) so that we can go back to our district and say we’ve got it all set up. If something comes up, like, I don’t really understand how we see this particular aspect in a student’s profile, we can ask questions.”

This group also suggested that it might be helpful to have collaborative Career Cruising trainings under a flipped classroom model, with a PowerPoint/tutorial sent in advance, followed with a face-to-face work session where participants engaged in the tool together and shared ideas across districts.

Focus group participants also mentioned that trainings did not include sufficient team worktime or sufficient cross-district sharing/collaboration time. Another complaint pertained to the composition of school/district teams in attendance at trainings. Several groups noted that the absence of administrators made trainings less effective for attendees, who felt they could not make decisions without those personnel being present. Additionally, some groups reported that the absence of other roles, such as core content teachers, teacher leaders, or elementary teachers, was problematic. Some suggested that a clearer description of “who should attend” would be helpful, though many admitted that these are very context-specific decisions.
Training materials

CESA partners reported using a variety of materials during trainings, the majority of which were DPI materials, but which also included materials that CESA coordinators created themselves, got from other CESAs, or found elsewhere (typically online). They also used “best practices” examples from districts around the state. CESA-created materials include a multi-year action plan, teacher surveys for use during gap analyses, an implementation survey for district leaders, a “website build” activity connected to PI-26, and PowerPoint presentations.

CESA partners cited a number of DPI materials that they had used, including:
- Career journey (4 mentions)
- Table of components / Know, Explore, Plan, Go (4 mentions)
- Card sort (3 mentions)
- ACP basics activity
- Career timelines
- Self-assessment
- Staff development lessons
- 4-year plan video
- Infrastructure surveys
- Elevator pitch activity
- Why ACP Matters video
- PI-26 planning document / administrative rule language

Across the board, CESA partners spoke favorably about DPI’s materials, saying they were helpful, but many noted they expect to have more specific feedback in the future as districts use them more. One interviewee wondered why many materials had been removed from the DPI website for revamping (“The stuff they put out last year was really good stuff; I’m not sure why they pulled it to re-vet. It was great.”) She also expressed relief that she had downloaded them all before they were removed. Several interviewees expressed that districts appreciate examples, and that the more that could be made available, the better. One interviewee mentioned that it would be best if there were a very specific “one stop shop” where all DPI materials for ACP are located, particularly when the collection grows.

Educator focus groups also identified additional ACP-related materials that they felt were needed or would be helpful. Their suggestions included:
- An ACP roadmap/overview/timeline to help communicate the “big picture”
- Checklists
  - to help determine compliance
  - to help teachers know what to cover in each grade
  - for parents to see what a child has completed and/or to know where parents should be involved
- Tools and support for measuring ACP
  - Effectiveness measures
  - Examples of impact data
  - Assessment rubrics for measuring student outcomes and impact
- ACP Standards, numbered like other standards
- Collaboration opportunities between districts
- Support for involvement of administrators
- Support for mentoring students
Guiding questions for teachers to use while leading Career Cruising activities
Career Cruising quick user refresher guide – for those who don’t use it frequently
Opportunities to provide feedback to Career Cruising
Lessons/activities on social skills development
Crosswalks
  - that incorporate counseling standards, Educator Effectiveness, CTE, etc.
  - with financial standards
Support for core teacher involvement
  - Video or other resource showing how the core areas fit into ACP
  - Involvement of the various teacher associations
Formats or templates for PI-26 plans
Business connections/coalitions, help making connections
Inspire that is organized geographically
Toolkits for businesses provided by the state so that “they are prepared when schools knock.”
Time

Additional training needs

Participants described a range of needs that they wished professional development could meet. Commonly mentioned were elements of trainings, such as more team worktime or more cross-district collaboration/sharing.

Participants also described specific areas of knowledge that they would like to be trained on:

- Interweaving ACP activities into the regular curriculum
- How to increase school-wide buy-in
- Presentations at teacher association conferences
- ACP Ed Camps
- Trainings that focus on follow-up conversations a year after implementation, including problem-solving with other districts
- Labor market information and workforce development data
- Student self-advocacy training/activities
- The role of elementary schools and educators in an ACP system
- Checklists or other means for “meeting the requirements” of ACP
- Templates for the PI-26 plan and for the overall implementation plan
- Outcomes, including ACP outcome data literacy, particularly for closing gaps, serving marginalized students, and presenting to potential business partners
- Parent engagement strategies, and fostering parent/student conversations at earlier ages
- The Career Advisor Management System (CAMS) element of Career Cruising
- Strategies and examples for integrating Career Cruising into the curriculum, in both stand-alone courses and within other courses
- A video that will support in-district staff training on Career Cruising
- Career Cruising refresher courses

In terms of professional development needs for people in various roles, focus group participants most commonly reported that (core content) teachers should receive training, followed by building administrators. Other roles mentioned included district administrators, counselors, advisors/mentors, CTE teachers, department heads, new staff, school board members and parents. In one focus group, a participant mentioned “everyone,” and the rest of the group agreed. Those participants whose districts
or schools had training sessions planned reported that they would take place during in-service days and back-to-school trainings, and that generally, counselors, sometimes with larger ACP teams, would lead the trainings. One participant, however, reported that her team determined that training should be done by a group that includes a number of teachers. This ACP team believed it would be more effective if a “mix of people” conducted the training as opposed to only counselors. The inclusion of teachers in this district is intended to avoid conveying the implicit message that “the counselors want you to do this,” which, they believed, would result in less teacher buy-in. The ACP coordinator in another district reported a training issue that left her feeling very frustrated. In her district, students have advisory periods where ACP-related activities occur, each teacher is assigned an advisory period to lead, and teachers are expected to learn to serve as advisors. Consequently, the ACP coordinator requested training time to this end, but was told by her district that she might need to “just send staff an email on how to be an advisor” instead of providing specific professional development to staff on how to be an effective advisor.

**CESA needs**

CESA partners were also asked what else they needed to be able to support districts on ACP. Responses included:

- Additional funding to be able to support districts in more depth with on-site visits, coaching, mentoring, and other forms of support (5 mentions)
- More base knowledge about ACP
- A needs assessment to see where CESA ACP coordinators are in their level of knowledge about the elements of ACP
- Use of assessments to help support career exploration and development
- Resources to support family engagement
- Examples of best practices from across the state
- Training for administrators
- More clarity on the expectations for next year for both CESAs and districts

Two interviewees reported that they have gotten “everything they need” from DPI.

**Additional district needs**

CESA partners identified a number of additional district needs for successful implementation of ACP, including:

- More time/funding (6 mentions)
- Administrator buy-in and support
- More ideas/examples about how to distribute/deliver ACP activities
- Team work time, particularly that involves collaborating/sharing across districts
- Measures of outcomes, particularly long-term outcomes
- Strategies for business and employer engagement, particularly in small rural districts
- Strategies for parent engagement
- Coaching and on-site support
- Resources pertaining to employability skills
- A strategic, long-term plan for ACP (next 5-10 years)
A number of participants across focus groups reported both the value of being able to collaborate with other districts and the desire to have additional collaboration opportunities organized for them. One participant mentioned that it might be easier for these to happen on a slightly more local level that would not involve traveling to a far-away CESA office. This led to a discussion of the lack of time, which was echoed in many focus groups. One group’s participants were very much in agreement when one person reported:

“The DPI site has given us a pretty clear view of what we’re mandated to do. I don’t think there are materials or resources the district needs in terms of helping us plan and implement. The description is there. [Another district] is going to have different capabilities with the community than we’ll have. We’ll be able to customize ACP elements for our area, for our school. I think we understand what we have to do, plan, and implement given the resources that DPI has. It’s just the time for our team to do it.”

This discussion then led to the idea of providing training in the format of flipped classrooms, mentioned earlier, wherein tutorials were provided in advance and participants arrived at the session to work, collaborate, and problem-solve.

Educators also mentioned the need for more support for apprenticeships and that the DPI website did not provide enough information in this regard. Others reported that the biggest hurdle is making connections with colleges and workplaces, and that support in those areas would be very helpful. Suggestions such as toolkits for businesses, and coordination among businesses to prevent them from being overwhelmed, would be helpful in making these connections.

**Evaluation Question #6: What is the baseline state of ACP outcomes across the state?**

To address this question, WEC collaborated with DPI to identify output and outcomes aligned with the ACP logic model and available within current DPI data collections. WEC then collected data from DPI to provide baseline trends for each of these measures for a variety of different subgroups. While baseline charts for all output and outcome measures are in Appendix H, this section of the report provides a brief overview and highlights a few existing gaps across subgroups of students. Next year’s evaluation report will build up these baseline trends to report potential changes in performance coinciding with ACP implementation.

**Outputs**

This report provides baseline information for two ACP outputs: the advanced course enrollment rate and the AP/IB enrollment rate. These two outputs are theoretically direct products of an increase in student engagement through ACP.

The advanced course enrollment rate, or the percentage of students who have taken at least one advanced or honors level course, in 2015-16 ranged from approximately 33 percent for 9th grade students to 61 percent for 12th grade students. We can see gaps in advanced course enrollment for the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, ELL, special education, African-American, American Indian, and Hispanic students.

The AP/IB enrollment rate, or the percentage of students who took at least one AP or IB course, in 2015-16 ranged from approximately 5 percent for 9th grade students and to 40 percent for 12th grade students. Gaps in the AP/IB enrollment rate exist for the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, ELL, special education, African-American, American Indian, Hispanic, and Rural students.
**Short-term outcomes**

This report provides baseline information for two ACP short-term outcomes including attendance rate and suspension rate. These two outcomes represent measures of student attitudes toward school that would likely improve as ACP provides more opportunity for student awareness of interests and skills and subsequently higher levels of motivation and engagement.

The attendance rate in 2015-16 was approximately 95 to 96 percent for middle school students (grades 6-8) and 93 to 94 percent for high school students (grades 9-12). Gaps exist in attendance rates for the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, ELL, special education, African-American, American Indian, Hispanic, and City students.

The out-of-school suspension rate in 2015-16 ranged from approximately 3 to 8 percent. Rates in suspension were greater for the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, special education, African-American, American Indian, and City students.

**Intermediate-term outcomes**

As ACP aims to improve 6-12 students’ career and college readiness, one should expect improvements in a variety of corresponding intermediate-term outcome measures, including ACT college readiness rates, ACT WorkKeys readiness rates, AP exam pass rates, dropout rates, and post-secondary enrollment rates.

ACT college readiness rates in this report are the percentage of students who earn college-ready level scores in at least three of the four subjects (English, Math, Reading, and Science). The ACT college readiness rate in 2015-16 was approximately 34 percent. Subgroups with gaps in this measure include economically disadvantaged, ELL, special education, African-American, American Indian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and City students.

ACT WorkKeys readiness rates are the percentage of students who are at least at level four in all subjects, which is the percentage of students earning a Silver ACT National Career Readiness Certificate. This rate in 2015-16 was approximately 78 percent. Gaps exist in the ACT WorkKeys readiness rate for the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, ELL, special education, African-American, American Indian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and City students.

The 2015-16 AP exam pass rate, or the percentage of AP exams with a score of 3 or better, ranged from 61 percent for 9th grade students to 68 percent for 12th grade students. AP exam pass rate gaps exist for the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, ELL (only 11th and 12th grade), special education, African-American, American Indian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and City students.

Dropout rates varied by grade level in 2014-15 (the most recent year of data available) from less than 1 percent of 9th and 10th grade students to approximately 3.5 percent of 12th grade students. Subgroups with gaps in the dropout rate include economically disadvantaged, ELL, special education, African-American, American Indian (only 11th and 12th grade), Hispanic, Pacific Islander (only 12th grade), Two or More Races (only 12th grade), and City students.

The final intermediate-term outcome in this report is the post-secondary enrollment rate, measured as the percentage of high school graduates who enrolled in a post-secondary institution by the fall of the following school year. In 2014-15 (the most recent year of data available), the post-secondary enrollment rate was approximately 59 percent. Gaps exist in post-secondary enrollment for the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, ELL, special education, African-American, American Indian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and City students.
**Additional outputs and outcomes**

There are several output and outcome measures not included in this report that will be included in next year’s report contingent on available data. These measures may include ACP software usage, CTE participation, work-based learning participation, dual credit attainment, and graduation rates. While by definition long-term outcomes will not be available in the next few years, future evaluation efforts could include these relevant measures. While data currently exist related to post-secondary persistence and graduation, there are few other measures of long-term ACP outcomes linked to DPI data systems. Other useful outcome measures include entering the workforce and earnings and employment levels.
Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Finding #1: Buy-in among building and district administrators is key for the success of the program, both for being able to successfully plan and build infrastructure, and for being able to obtain teacher buy-in. Teachers and other stakeholders report that administrator knowledge, involvement, and buy-in for the process both sets the tone for the rest of the district/school and enables progress to be made by allocating resources and enabling decision-making. ACP-related goals can become integrated with, or even foundational to, district/school improvement plans, but administrators will need to understand why and how to do so.

Recommendation: DPI should prioritize the development and dissemination of communications, advocacy efforts, professional development, networking, and training opportunities around ACP that target school- and district-level administrators.

Key Finding #2: As found in the pilot evaluation, resistance and lack of buy-in by some teachers, particularly high school core content teachers, is still a challenge. Most stakeholders see the value in ACP programming and agree with its rationale and purposes, but some teachers fear increased workload and/or being responsible for delivering curriculum outside their areas of expertise. Others express the belief that ACP is just another initiative that will eventually go away.

Recommendation: DPI should provide strong support and resources to districts to recognize the importance of, to develop, and to implement an implementation plan around ACP that carefully delineates teachers’ roles. Scope and sequence, materials and resources, and professional development for teachers should all be part of the implementation plan. Rolling out an implementation plan without a clear scope and sequence may reduce teacher buy-in because of lack of clarity around teachers’ roles and added workload. As recommended in Year 1, including teachers in the planning phases is also necessary for buy-in, and it may be that the choice of teachers included on an ACP planning committee needs to be strategic. Participants often mentioned the strategy of including teacher leaders or others who are known for garnering support around ideas. Some participants have described the strategy of putting efforts into winning the favor of potential critics who tend to sway colleagues. Regardless of the strategy used, rolling out the implementation plan to the rest of the staff should be a well-thought-out process.

Recommendation: As part of support around implementation plans, DPI should emphasize that an implementation plan must include an effective, ongoing communication plan. Messaging strategies that districts could adopt/adapt include:

- ACP is not a passing fad, but rather, an integral element of best practices in educating and preparing students for life.
- ACP is not an add-on or an additional content area, but rather, an enhancement for current efforts to effectively educate all students and can help make the school experience seamless across all disciplines and content areas.
- Effective educators build engaging instructional environments that build on each student’s backgrounds, strengths, and interests. These instructional practices are included in both of the major teacher evaluation rubrics in use in Wisconsin.
- Effective teaching and real-world relevancy increase student engagement and help address inequities.
- Making connections between/integrating ACP, addressing issues of equity, effective teaching and other strategic priorities can address initiative fatigue and the idea of “one more thing.”
**Recommendation:** DPI should consider working with the various teacher associations, including and especially content area associations, to help get teachers on board with ACP via their association briefings, conferences, and other means. Teachers may be more receptive to ACP curricular and instructional ideas when voiced by content-area colleagues than by those outside their areas, such as counselors or CTE staff.

**Key Finding #3:** Stakeholders have expressed uncertainty and sometimes suspicion about the future of ACP, including around issues of compliance and monitoring.

**Recommendation:** DPI should consider its messaging and communication strategies around these topics to ensure clarity and transparency. Many stakeholders who were visited by DPI ACP team members, either in districts or at CESAs, reported how much they appreciated that level of contact, which they often said was an important factor in increasing enthusiasm and buy-in. To the extent that its capacity allows, DPI should continue to leverage face-time around the state in connection to ACP.

**Key Finding #4:** According to the statewide survey, student knowledge around ACP was still rather low, but among focus group students who were engaging in ACP programming and activities, students reported that they valued ACP programming and generally wanted it to be rigorous, encompassing, and personalized. Moreover, student perspectives, which to date have been examined very little, yield valuable feedback for revising ACP programming. WEC evaluators conducted student focus groups in four districts, after which they sent reports detailing findings from the focus groups to leaders in those districts. Feedback from leaders on these reports was very positive and enthusiastic. If changes are made in programming in response to student feedback – that is, if students can see their recommendations being put in place – further student acceptance and engagement is likely.

**Recommendation:** DPI should find ways to communicate the current report’s student feedback findings to districts, particularly that students want ACP programming to be rigorous, engaging and worth students’ efforts. The more students are able to personalize their ACP activities, the more relevant and useful they found them, reinforcing the recommendation that ACP programming does not function well in a “one size fits all” approach to delivering services.

**Recommendation:** DPI should continue to examine the student voice as part of efforts to evaluate and inform ACP programming. Furthermore, DPI should communicate to districts the value and importance of including student feedback in planning and evaluation efforts, and provide resources for districts/schools to be able to do so.

**Key Finding #5:** While having dedicated time in a school schedule to deliver ACP activities seems to be the most effective way to deliver to all students, focus group students in districts with such structures often viewed ACP-related activities as limited to what happened during ACP time (homeroom, advisory, etc.). With this assumption, they failed to realize that there was additional ACP-related support occurring at other times and in other places (such as advising from counselors, internships, career fairs, ACT prep, dual credit opportunities, etc.). In addition, students offered considerable feedback regarding dedicated ACP time in terms of how various kinds of sorting or assignment strategies served them. Specifically, students tended to recommend being grouped according to similar interests or post-secondary paths, but only if the various groups allowed for differentiated, focused ACP work and were well supported by adults. Students expressed the importance of advising or mentoring relationships with trusted and knowledgeable adults, but were also sensitive to the ability of adults to perform these roles well. Finally, flexibility to move between various interest-focused grouping in ACP time is necessary to avoid the perception of being “tracked” or privileged/disprivileged.
**Recommendation:** Districts should be advised, as part of their ongoing ACP communication plans, to repeatedly stress to students and other stakeholders the total arc of their ACP programming across grades so that students are aware of the progression of ACP-related work.

**Recommendation:** DPI should continue to investigate different types of sorting/assignment strategies that districts/schools use to match students (and adults) to designated ACP time and/or mentoring relationships, particularly to leverage adults’ areas of expertise and interest, and communicate to districts the potential advantages and disadvantages associated with each. Further, DPI should communicate to districts that when students are divided into ACP time groupings by interest area, post-secondary plan, or other dissimilar groupings, there should be flexibility to move between them as students’ interests and plans evolve or change.

**Recommendation:** Professional development/training, materials, and resources are needed for districts/schools to support adults in advisory roles, particularly teachers and other staff who have not otherwise served in such roles.

**Key Finding #6:** Principal surveys and limited parent interviews indicate that parental knowledge around ACP is generally quite low. Parents indicated that they want to know more about their district’s/school’s ACP plans in general, as well as how students are involved at any given point in their education, and, to some extent, what parents can (or “are supposed to”) do to support their students. However, parental input was very limited and difficult to obtain. Family engagement strategies and existing family engagement efforts will need to be leveraged to determine how to best pursue this area of investigation.

**Recommendation:** Districts should be encouraged to include parents in their initial and ongoing communication efforts around ACP, both in terms of disseminating information and collecting feedback, and DPI should consider making materials available to support these efforts.

**Recommendation:** DPI and WEC will need to tap into family engagement efforts and strategies at the state and local levels to be able to gather feedback from parents about ACP in subsequent evaluation work. Furthermore, the various family-engagement related projects at DPI may all benefit from collaborating and sharing findings/practices with each other to maximize their outcomes and prevent overlapping efforts, such as multiple parent surveys that reduce the response rate of all efforts due to parental “survey fatigue.”

**Key Finding #7:** Survey and focus group data indicate that districts experience difficulties in sharing knowledge about their ACP efforts with their local/regional business communities, as well as getting businesses involved in their efforts. Both sides stand to benefit from successful, well-considered collaborations, but similar to many of these recommendations, strategic communication and engagement efforts are necessary. Engaging the business community, however, may be novel for many schools/districts.

**Recommendation:** DPI should provide districts with resources for communicating with the local business community, such as (customizable) information packets along the lines of “How Can Your Business Benefit from ACP?”

**Key Finding #8:** Some districts requested professional development and other forms of support around ACP outcomes, including ACP outcome data literacy, particularly for closing gaps, serving marginalized students, and presenting outcomes to potential business partners. Additionally, at this point, DPI is not yet able to track some of the major outcomes identified for ACP, such as post-graduation activities other than post-secondary education enrollment.
**Recommendation:** DPI should provide districts with support (training and resources) on ACP outcome data literacy, data collection and tracking measures.

**Recommendation:** DPI should preview planned work in this area to districts, with timelines if possible, to allow districts to see the potential for, and the accessibility of, data of this kind.
Next Steps

Working with DPI, WEC evaluators will develop evaluation questions and an evaluation plan for the Year 3 – Statewide Implementation – phase of the ACP evaluation. Potential next steps include:

1. Continue to engage and collect student voice regarding ACP.
2. Investigate the sorting/assignment/grouping strategies for ACP Time in various districts that have specifically dedicated time blocks.
3. Investigate the ability to partner with existing family engagement efforts on the state and local levels to collect additional parental feedback and determine best practices for engaging parents in ACP efforts.
4. Continue to collect student ACP-related outcome data to begin measuring changes over time in relation to baseline data collected this year.
5. Determine the kinds of ACP data and other resources that districts need in order to evaluate local efforts.
Appendices

Appendix A – Former Pilot District Coordinator Phone Interview Protocol

Final version
ACP Evaluation – Year 2 (2016-17)
November 28, 2016

Proposed procedure:

- Last year’s coordinator/interviewees are no longer under any obligation to participate in the evaluation, so participation would be completely voluntary. Some may also no longer be involved or in the same districts. We are shooting to speak to about 50%.
- Email to invite former pilot district coordinators to do a follow-up interview – Robin will draft a copy. WCER evaluators to contact the same people/districts they interviewed last spring, and set up interviews with whoever is willing.
- Revise generic protocol based on interview from last spring.
- Take notes and record audio; upload notes to Sharepoint.
- Phone interviews to take place in November / December.
- Findings, along with those of upcoming statewide survey, are intended to inform efforts to find “interesting districts” in which to conduct focus groups (of teachers, students, parents).

Overarching Evaluation Question:

“How have last year’s pilot districts followed up on their pilot year activities?”

Interview questions:

1. How is the ACP work going this year? How are you involved? (probe whether there is still a committee, if interviewee is on it, still coordinating? Same or different people on committee?)
2. What successes have you experienced this year? Challenges?
3. Is your district still continuing to utilize your original plan from the pilot year? What, if any, modifications have you made since last spring?
4. (For any activities they said were being delayed until this year) Are __________ activities occurring this year?
5. Have you developed a scope and sequence for ACP?
6. Is there a plan for implementing grade-level component delivery to support ACP? If so, is it being implemented? If yes, how has actual implementation aligned to your plan? What percentage of students in grades 6-12 are you reaching?
7. What, if any, PD activities has your district delivered?* What was their nature (what sort of PD format, who conducted it, at whom was it targeted, who attended, etc.)? How successful do you think they were?
8. What DPI or other resources have you utilized this year? Are there additional resources that you would like to see?
9. To what extent have you collaborated with other school districts, whether former pilot districts or non-pilot districts? On what did you collaborate? What did you think of the collaboration and why?
10. Have you engaged any new partners or stakeholders (businesses, higher eds, families, communities, etc.) this year? In what ways?

11. To what extent have you used Career Cruising (or your own choice of software) in ACP efforts?

12. Is there anything else you’d like us to know?

*DPI PD materials: [http://dpi.wi.gov/acp/implementation/pd](http://dpi.wi.gov/acp/implementation/pd)

As of 11/28/16, it looks like only lessons 1-5 (of 40) are available.
Appendix B – Pre-Implementation Survey Results

Introduction
As part of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s (DPI) Academic and Career Planning (ACP) evaluation, Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) evaluators distributed a survey to all principals of schools with grades 6 through 12. The purpose of this survey was to gather information related to ACP familiarity and readiness for implementation across the state. Specific areas of interest were ACP infrastructure development, perceptions of ACP awareness in schools, perceptions of ACP buy-in, ACP professional development, the extent ACP service delivery is occurring, and the usefulness of ACP resources.

WCER opened the survey on November 3, 2016 and DPI sent it to 1,074 school principals across the state. A reminder was sent by DPI to 1,224 school principals on November 15, 2016 that included principals missed in the original distribution. The survey closed on November 21, 2016. Of the 1,224 principals sent the survey, 357 responded to the survey and 280 completed the survey for a response rate of 29 percent and a completion rate of 78 percent. For reference, each of the tables and figures in this report provide the exact number of respondents to the item(s) displayed. The Appendix contains the survey used in this analysis.

Respondent Demographics
This section of the report provides information on the respondent principals’ schools. Overall, responses to the survey came from 195 different districts across the state. Table 1 shows a breakdown of respondents by their Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) region. As seen, while many of the respondents were from CESA 1, CESA 2, and CESA 5, there were at least 10 respondents from every CESA region.

Table 1: Respondents by CESA Region (N=276)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CESA Region</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CESA 1</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 2</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 4</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 6</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 7</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 8</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 10</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 11</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA 12</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To further examine the types of schools respondent principals worked in, the survey asked what grade levels their school serves. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of responses to this item. Of the principals
responding to this item, approximately 70 percent worked in a school serving high school grades (9-12) and approximately 55 percent worked in a school serving the middle school grades (6-8).

Figure 1: Grades Served in Respondents Schools (N=271)

Note: Respondents were able to indicate more than one grade; the total may be greater than 100 percent.

ACP Infrastructure

The first major section of the survey examined principal perceptions of ACP infrastructure development. The first question in this section asked respondents, “Does your school/district have a staff position dedicated specifically for ACP?” Of the 357 respondents to this question, 38 percent indicated that they did have a staff position specifically for ACP (61 percent indicated “No” and 2 percent indicated “Don’t know”). The survey also asked if respondents have a leadership team in place for overseeing ACP implementation, and 75 percent indicated affirmatively (22 percent responded “No” and 4 percent responded “Don’t know” out of the 357 respondents). Of those responding that there is a team in place, Table 2 shows a breakdown of how frequently these teams meet. Half of the respondents with an ACP leadership team indicated that their team meets monthly.

Table 2: ACP Leadership Team Meeting Frequency (N=233)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly or bi-weekly</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 times/year</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 times/year</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 times/year</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less frequently</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACP leadership teams often consisted of staff such as counselors, teachers, and principals or school administration according to respondents. Table 3 shows the breakdown of team composition based on an open-ended item that asked, “What staff are on your ACP leadership team?” A small minority of principals reported having parents (2 percent) or students (1 percent) on their leadership team.

Table 3: ACP Leadership Team Composition (N=229)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal/School Administrator</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Service Specialist</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent/District Administrator</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Board Member</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents were able to respond with more than one position; the total may be greater than 100 percent.

Beyond ACP staff roles, the survey also examined progress on four ACP infrastructure components: a readiness assessment or gap analysis, an implementation plan, a communication plan, and a family engagement plan. Table 4 shows the percent of respondents at each stage of development for each of these four components. The majority of respondents indicated that they were at least in the “In development” stage for these four components. Having an implementation plan is the component at the most advanced stage with 46 percent having some form of a plan in place.

Table 4: Stage of Development and Implementation by ACP Infrastructure Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Readiness Assessment/Gap Analysis (N=313)</th>
<th>Implementation Plan (N=314)</th>
<th>Communication Plan (N=316)</th>
<th>Family Engagement Plan (N=315)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In place and completed</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In place and started</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In place but haven’t started</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not yet developed</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One key aspect to ACP infrastructure development is engagement and collaboration with families in the district as well as stakeholders within the community such as nearby postsecondary institutions, local businesses, and local community organizations. Table 5 shows the level of engagement and collaboration with these stakeholders as well as the level of knowledge these stakeholders have regarding district ACP efforts. As seen, respondents indicated the highest levels of collaboration with postsecondary institutions (52 percent very high or somewhat high) and the lowest levels of
collaboration with community organizations (35 percent very high or somewhat high). In terms of stakeholder knowledge, respondents indicated that many of these stakeholders had somewhat low or very low knowledge of district ACP implementation, ranging from 45 to 62 percent. However, respondents also had some degree of uncertainty with 9 to 19 percent indicating that they did not know.

Table 5: Levels of ACP Engagement and Collaboration with Families and District Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>Somewhat High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Somewhat Low</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, engagement with families in my district is (N=315)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with local postsecondary institutions near my district is (N=315)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with local businesses near my district is (N=315)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with local community organizations near my district is (N=315)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental knowledge of my school's ACP implementation is (N=312)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local postsecondary institution knowledge of my school's ACP implementation is (N=315)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The local business community's knowledge of my school's ACP implementation is (N=315)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local community organization knowledge of my school's ACP implementation is (N=315)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the similar scaling on the items related to stakeholder collaboration and knowledge, this report also provides stakeholder engagement indices for these two areas. These indices are derived from categorizing responses of “Very high” as a 5 through “Very low” as a 1 and averaging the responses across the relevant items. The resulting indices range from 1 to 5. Across all respondents, the average engagement index for collaboration is 3.2 (moderate), and the average engagement index for stakeholder knowledge is 2.1 (somewhat low). Figure 2 shows the box plots for these two indices.¹ As Figure 2 demonstrates, there were higher levels of stakeholder collaboration as compared to

¹The shaded boxes indicate the 25th to 75th percentile range. The horizontal bar in the box indicates the median or 50th percentile. The whiskers outside of the box indicate the lowest and highest data points within 1.5 times the interquartile range of the lower quartile and higher quartile respectively. Dots outside the whiskers signify outlier responses. The ‘X’ indicates the mean of all respondents.
stakeholder knowledge. Providing further information to these stakeholders on district ACP efforts may aid in infrastructure efforts and long-term collaboration.

Figure 2: ACP Engagement Indices for Stakeholder Collaboration and Stakeholder Knowledge

ACP Awareness and Knowledge
The second major section of the survey examined perceptions of ACP awareness and knowledge for three categories of school actors: principals, staff, and students. Table 6 shows how respondents rated their own (principal) awareness and knowledge of ACP. A majority of respondents for each statement indicated either very high or somewhat high knowledge. General awareness had the highest responses (65 percent very high or somewhat high) and knowledge of how ACP aligns with other district initiatives had the lowest responses (50 percent very high or somewhat high).

Table 6: Principal Awareness and Knowledge of ACP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>Somewhat High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Somewhat Low</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My general awareness of ACP is (N=304)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My knowledge of ACP components is (N=304)</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My knowledge of my school/district's ACP implementation plan is (N=304)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My knowledge of my role within ACP is (N=304)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My knowledge of how ACP aligns with other district initiatives is (N=304)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 shows respondent perceptions of school staff awareness and knowledge of ACP. A majority of respondents for each item indicated a perception of moderate or somewhat low knowledge among staff. Here again, general ACP awareness had the highest responses with 23 percent of respondents indicating a very high or somewhat high awareness among staff. Respondents indicated that staff knew the least about how ACP aligns with other district initiatives (54 percent somewhat low or very low).

Table 7: Principal Perceptions of Staff Awareness and Knowledge of ACP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>Somewhat High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Somewhat Low</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General ACP awareness among staff in my school is (N=305)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of my school/district's ACP implementation plan among staff in my school is (N=305)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of ACP components among staff in my school is (N=305)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of their role within ACP among staff in my school is (N=304)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff knowledge of how ACP aligns with other district initiatives is (N=305)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with staff, principals reported that students also had generally low levels of knowledge regarding ACP. Table 8 shows respondent perceptions of student ACP awareness and knowledge. The majority of respondents indicated for each item that student knowledge was somewhat low or very low.

Table 8: Principal Perceptions of Student Awareness and Knowledge of ACP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>Somewhat High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Somewhat Low</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General ACP awareness among students in my school is (N=305)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of ACP components among students in my school is (N=305)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student knowledge of their role within ACP is (N=305)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with stakeholder engagement, ACP awareness lends itself well to indices creation due to the similar items and response categories. The three awareness indices created for this report are principal knowledge, staff knowledge, and student knowledge. The average principal knowledge index is 3.6 (somewhat high to moderate), the average staff knowledge index is 2.5 (moderate to somewhat low), and the average student knowledge index is 2.3 (somewhat low). Figure 3 shows the box plots for these three awareness indices. These results indicate that respondents perceived themselves (principals) to have the highest levels of knowledge regarding ACP followed by staff, then students. This is
unsurprising, given that the path of ACP professional development typically flows in the same direction from administration to staff, and eventually to students through ACP implementation. Figure 3 also shows a higher level of variance among perceptions of student knowledge indicating a wide spread in where schools may be in providing initial lessons to their student populations.

Figure 3: ACP Awareness Indices for Principal Knowledge, Staff Knowledge, and Student Knowledge

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**Buy-In and Staff Engagement**

The third major section of the survey asked questions related to school beliefs and priorities in an effort to examine ACP buy-in and engagement. Table 9 shows respondent perceptions of value that staff in their school place on beliefs related to ACP. A majority of respondents for each item indicated that staff believe these items to have somewhat high or moderate value. The only exception was that 70 percent of respondents thought that staff held very high or somewhat high value in honoring all postsecondary options, not just a four-year college, in their school. There was a degree of uncertainty in these items, however, as 15 to 23 percent of respondents answered “Don’t know.”
Table 9: Principal Perceptions of Staff ACP Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very High Value</th>
<th>Somewhat High Value</th>
<th>Moderate Value</th>
<th>Somewhat Low Value</th>
<th>Very Low Value</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff in my school believe providing ACP for all students in grades 6-12 has (N=293)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff in my school believe having an ACP implementation plan has (N=293)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff in my school believe developing ACP infrastructure has (N=293)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff in my school believe ACP professional development has (N=293)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff in my school believe honoring all postsecondary options, not just four-year college/university, has (N=293)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff in my school believe having a systematic, whole school plan for providing ACP components has (N=293)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another way to gauge buy-in to ACP is to examine district priorities. Table 10 illustrates district priorities related to several ACP items. For all of these items, a majority of respondents indicated a very high or somewhat high priority within their district. The highest district priority among these statements was honoring all postsecondary options with 83 percent of respondents indicating it to be a very high or somewhat high priority. The lowest district priority was ACP professional development with 57 percent of respondents indicating it to be a very high or somewhat high priority.
### Table 10: ACP District Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very High Priority</th>
<th>Somewhat High Priority</th>
<th>Moderate Priority</th>
<th>Somewhat Low Priority</th>
<th>Very Low Priority</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing ACP for all students in grades 6-12 is a (N=292)</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an ACP implementation plan is a (N=292)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing ACP infrastructure is a (N=291)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP professional development is a (N=291)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honoring all postsecondary options, not just four-year college/university, is a (N=292)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a systematic, whole school plan for providing ACP components has (N=292)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining buy-in overall, this report also provides indices for ACP staff values and district priorities. The average index score among respondents for ACP staff values is 3.6 (somewhat high to moderate value) and the average index for district priorities is 4.0 (somewhat high priority). Figure 4 shows the box plots for these two indices. The high values of these indices and relatively low variance highlights a generally positive perception of ACP and an active engagement on the part of schools to have ACP efforts be of high priority and value.

**Figure 4: ACP Buy-In Indices for Staff Values and District Priorities**

![Box plots showing indices for ACP staff values and district priorities](image-url)
Professional Development

Another area of focus on the survey was ACP professional development. Table 11 shows the proportion of respondents indicating what percent of their staff engaged in ACP related training. A majority of respondents (52 percent) indicated that less than one-quarter of their staff received professional development related to ACP. A large minority (20 percent) indicated that nearly all of their staff received ACP training. Likely, this gap results from a small portion of schools throughout the state who have started this process earlier than others have.

Table 11: Percent of Staff Engaged in ACP related training (N=292)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Staff</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76-100%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-75%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-25%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None yet</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The type of ACP professional development provided to staff varied across schools. Of those schools that reported some form of ACP training, Table 12 shows the delivery methods for ACP professional development. The most frequently employed delivery method was staff meetings (53 percent), followed by in-service days (44 percent) and CESA workshops (41 percent).

Table 12: ACP Professional Development Delivery Methods (N=288)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-service days</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff meetings</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESA workshops</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online materials for individual use</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade/team level meetings</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We did not do any ACP professional development</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents were able to indicate more than one method; the total may be greater than 100 percent.

The survey allowed respondents to include other types of professional development delivery methods not included in the item as well. These other reported types of ACP professional development methods included (in order of frequency): ACP conferences, professional learning communities, counselor provided training, curriculum planning teams/meetings, newsletters or emails, and DPI trainings.

They survey also asked respondents “What topics were covered in the ACP professional development?” as an open-ended question. Table 12 shows the reported topics covered in the ACP professional development. Nearly half of respondents indicated that the provided professional development included an ACP overview or software training. The “specific activities” topic included activities such as student interest inventories, career exploration, apprenticeships, job shadowing, and goal setting.
Table 12: ACP Professional Development Topics (N=139)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development Topic</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACP 101 or ACP overview</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software training</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation plan, infrastructure, or ACP roles</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP purpose or rationale</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap/needs analysis</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and sequence or curriculum</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific activities</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary opportunities or field trips</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career pathways or career clusters</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student portfolios or ACPs</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring, conferencing, or family engagement</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business or community partnerships</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPI requirements or compliance</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial literacy</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents were able to write in more than one topic; the total may be greater than 100 percent.

Service Delivery

While full statewide implementation of ACP is not scheduled until the 2017-18 school year, many schools already provide ACP services. Table 13 shows varying types of ACP services and the proportion of respondents indicating what percent of students in their schools receive those services. A majority of respondents indicated that their schools already provide access to ACP tools and resources as well as opportunities for students to engage in self-exploration activities to gauge their strengths, interests, and values; career exploration activities; and postsecondary education exploration activities. Two services that respondents indicated their schools are not fully implementing were dedicated time for ACP in their regular schedule (26 percent reported that nearly all of their students received this), and assigning students to an ACP coach, mentor, homeroom, or advisory teacher (40 percent reported that nearly all of their students received this).

Table 13: Percent of Students Receiving ACP Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76-100%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-75%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None yet</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources and Software

The last area of focus on the survey was ACP resources and software use. DPI provides a variety of ACP resources to schools and the survey asked respondents to evaluate their usefulness. Table 14 displays the results from this question. In many cases, respondents were uncertain and responded with “Don’t know.” In the cases where respondents knew how to rate ACP resources, respondents rated DPI’s website as the most useful resource (43 percent indicating extremely useful or very useful). The least useful resource appeared to be the ACP twitter (6 percent indicating extremely useful or very useful), though there was also a high degree of uncertainty with 62 percent indicating “Don’t know.”

Table 14: Usefulness of DPI Provided ACP Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Extremely Useful</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Moderately Useful</th>
<th>Slightly Useful</th>
<th>Not At All Useful</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DPI’s website (N=284)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+ community (N=283)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP blog (N=281)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP twitter (N=282)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP reflective questions (N=279)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure self-assessment (N=282)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know-Explore-Plan-Go self-assessment (N=281)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP staff lessons (N=283)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To inquire about ACP software, the survey asked respondents how far along, or what stage they were at, in adoption. Table 15 shows the results from this item. A majority of respondents (55 percent) indicated that they are either continuing with their current system or have a new system in place. Of those without a system in place, many are in the process of switching to a new system (20 percent of all respondents).

Table 15: Stage of ACP Software Adoption (N=284)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuing with current system</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New system in place</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switching to new system</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding on software</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have software</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly all respondents (93 percent) indicated that they use Career Cruising as their ACP software, as illustrated in Table 16. The other software used included CareerLocker (3 percent), Naviance (3 percent), a combination of Career Cruising and CareerLocker, and Inspire.
Table 16: ACP Software Used (N=215)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT Profile</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Cruising</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CareerLocker (WISCareers)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuder</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Next Move</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naviance</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

The findings from this survey are intended to serve primarily as a baseline for future data collection, including a similar survey planned for the spring of 2018. However, care should be taken when generalizing the results of this survey to a greater population, as the response rate, as indicated in the Introduction, is somewhat low. Nonetheless, the results can be useful for providing an idea of the range of readiness across the state for implementing ACP, as well as for identifying some principals’ beliefs about the ACP process and perceptions of local implementation at a particular point in time.

As these data indicate, a majority of principals report that there are ACP leadership teams in place with activities to build infrastructure under way. Engagement with families and community partners has begun, but stakeholder knowledge of a school/district’s implementation of ACP lags somewhat behind. Similarly, principals report their knowledge of ACP to be relatively high, but they believe that teachers’ and others’ knowledge is somewhat less. Notwithstanding a fair degree of uncertainty, principals perceive that staff tend to value the beliefs related to ACP rather highly.

While principals tended to report that the majority of their staff had not yet participated in professional development activities around ACP, what did happen usually occurred during in-service days, staff meetings, and CESA trainings. The most common topics addressed were overviews of ACP, software training, and implementation plans, infrastructure, and staff roles. Although statewide implementation of ACP is not required until 2017-18, many schools are already delivering some level of services to at least some students. The least common element reported was the use of time dedicated specifically to ACP during the school schedule, an element reported by pilot teams during the 2016 evaluation to be crucial for success. Among the DPI-provided resources for ACP, the website was seen as the most useful. However, there was considerable uncertainty reported about resources, perhaps reflecting that principals were not typically those charged with managing the details of implementation. Finally, the adoption of ACP-supporting software was in place in most schools, although a small percentage are either still deciding or do not have software, and 16 percent of respondents did not know what the status of software was for their district.

In addition to providing the baseline for a follow-up survey, next steps for this data include identifying possible school/district candidates for mini case studies. This aspect of data collection will involve focus groups with students and families to probe deeper about beliefs and perceptions regarding ACP and implementation. Numerous respondents reported willing to be contacted for further information or a visit, so the evaluation team will be able to benefit from a wealth of choices.
Appendix C – CESA ACP Personnel Interview Protocol

Final version
ACP Evaluation – Year 2 (2016-17)
March 13, 2017

Overall Evaluation Question (#4): How are CESA partners serving districts around ACP?

*Individual interview questions for CESA ACP partners:*

1. Number of ACP trainings their CESA has delivered/are scheduled for this school year.
2. Nature of trainings (Career Cruising, Planning, Sharing Practices, etc.)
3. Materials used during trainings (DPI or otherwise).
4. Feedback on DPI materials (probe for which materials specifically, helpfulness).
5. Number of districts/attendees that have been to trainings.
6. How many districts have NOT attended any ACP-related trainings/how many districts are in your CESA? What are you doing to reach school districts not participating/contacting you or otherwise in touch?
7. What do you think the level of readiness is across your CESA region?
8. What else do CESAs need to be able to support districts on ACP?
9. What else do you think districts need to successfully implement ACP?
Appendix D – Educator Focus Group Protocol

Final version
ACP Evaluation – Year 2 (2016-17)
March 13, 2017

Overall Evaluation Question (#4): How are CESA partners serving districts around ACP?

Focus group questions for ACP training participants:

1. At what stage is your school/district in terms of ACP implementation? Planning, creating infrastructure, partial or full implementation?
2. How does staff in your school/district feel about ACP? Extent of buy-in? Is there pushback, and if so, on what?
3. What types of ACP trainings have you done so far? How helpful have the trainings been around ACP at your CESA?
4. What other ACP-related professional development do you think should be offered?
5. What staff (roles) in your district do you feel should receive training? Are there plans to train these people? Where? By whom?
6. What ACP materials have you used (DPI or other)? How useful, helpful, etc. are they?
7. What additional ACP-related materials do you think are needed?
8. Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about ACP (in your district or school)?
Appendix E – Student Focus Group Protocol

Final version
ACP Evaluation – Year 2 (2016-17)
March 1, 2017

Intro:

- Your name, assistant moderator’s name, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Statewide evaluation of Academic and Career Planning.
- Talking to groups of 11th graders and 8th graders around the state.
- We heard your school is doing interesting things with ACP and wanted to learn more.
- Using first names only, everything you say is completely confidential, no names will be used in our reports.
- No right or wrong answers, we just want to hear your opinions, whether positive or negative.
- Audio-recording this so we don’t miss anything.
- Information will be used to help the state Department of Public Instruction better help school districts with their ACP activities.

Questions for participants:

1. **Warm-up – ice-breaker** – Go around the room and say your name and tell us, if you had an unlimited budget, what would you do for spring break? *(Or substitute question)*
2. Introduce the topic of “Academic and Career Planning.” *(Or substitute a different name if district has branded it otherwise).*
3. What do you understand to be the purpose of (ACP)?
   - *Probe for goals, outcomes, rationale, etc.*
4. What are your opinions of those purpose(s) of (ACP)?
   - *Probe—whom is (ACP) for? (all kids, kids who want to go to tech colleges, etc.)*
   - *Probe – who is best served/helped by this program?*
5. What kinds of activities are involved in (ACP) at your school?
   - *Might get this from the district/school plan, but also important to capture their perceptions.*
6. Which of those have you participated in? In which grades? Does EVERYONE in your grade do these activities? If not, who doesn’t? How do you know?
7. Where/when do you do these activities?
   - *Can be eliminated if information is available from school/district plan.*
8. Which activities did you find the most enjoyable? What made them enjoyable?
9. Which activities did you find the most useful? What made them useful?
10. Which activities did you find less worthwhile? What made them less worthwhile?
11. Do you think (ACP) is benefitting you? How/why not? If you had the choice, would you do (ACP) or not?
12. Has doing (ACP) caused you to change your mind about any plans or goals or otherwise do anything differently than you might have otherwise done? How so?
   - *(Examples: Course selection? Electives? Post-high school goals, career ideas?)*
13. How could (ACP) be improved? / What would make it better?
14. What else would you like to tell us about (ACP)?
Appendix F - Parent Focus Group/Interview Protocol

Final version
ACP Evaluation – Year 2 (2016-17)
November 28, 2016

• Duration: 30 minutes
• Audio recorded if participants agree
• Table tents with first names only if doing a focus group

Focus group / interview questions for participants:

1. Warm-up – ice-breaker – if you had an unlimited budget and availability, what would your family do for spring break?
2. Introduce topic of “Academic and Career Planning.” *(Or substitute a different name if district has branded it otherwise).* What, if anything, have you heard about (ACP)? What does (ACP) involve at your kids’ school?
3. What do you know/understand to be the purpose of (ACP)?
   *Probe for goals, outcomes, rationale, etc.*
4. What do you think about the purpose(s) of (ACP)?
   *Probe—whom is (ACP) for? (all kids, kids who want to go to tech colleges, etc.)*
   *Probe – who is best served/helped by this program?*
5. What, if any, activities has your student talked about doing regarding (ACP)? How did they seem to feel about those activities? What are your impressions of those activities? Valuable? Otherwise?
6. Do you think (ACP) is benefitting your kids?
7. How would you, as parents and family members, like to be engaged in (ACP)?
8. How could (ACP) be improved? / What would make it better?
9. What else would you like to tell us about your impressions of (ACP)?
Appendix G – Output and Outcome Measures Detailed Methodology

This appendix provides detailed information on the ACP output and outcome measure calculations and demographic subgroups utilized in this report. On June 2, 2016, WEC requested statewide, student-level data from DPI for the school years 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 related to student demographics and ACP measures of outputs and outcomes. Data sets received from DPI included:

- Student attributes file with information on student demographics and grade level
- Attendance file with information on student absences
- Suspensions file with information on out of school suspension occurrences
- Exit codes file with information on school transfers, completion, and dropouts
- High school completion file
- Post-secondary enrollment file
- ACT results file with information on test scores and college-ready benchmark status
- ACT WorkKeys results file with information on test scores and level scores
- Coursework Completion System file with information on courses taken, grades, course rigor, and AP and IB courses
- AP exam results file with information on tests taken and test scores

All data sets provided also included district and school information for students.

Subgroups of analysis

For all measures, this report breaks results down by school year, grade level (where applicable), race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability status, English proficiency status, and locale description. For all reported statistics, the information on grade level, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged status, disability status, and English proficiency status came from the student attributes file. DPI defines economically disadvantaged as eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and disability as participation in special education. For each student and each statistic, this report used the district and school information from those files. When the school information was missing, we attributed the district and school information given in the student attributes file. For instance, when measuring AP exam pass rates, district and school information came from the AP exam results file. Locale description information is a designation based on school location that specifies whether a school is in a city, suburb, town, or rural setting. These codes are tied to specific schools and not students. In the majority of cases, these codes came from publically available school report card files on DPI’s website. When a school was missing a locale description code, this evaluation used the code most associated with that school’s district.

Output measures

This report examined two output measures: advanced course enrollment and AP or IB course enrollment. Both of these measures used data from the Coursework Completion System file. This file contained course level information including an indicator for course rigor level and whether a course was an AP or IB course. Course rigor level included four categories: Basic, General, Enriched or Advanced, and Honors. The metric for course rigor used in this evaluation is the percent of students taking at least one advanced level or honors level course. The metric for AP and IB used in this evaluation is the percent of students taking at least one AP or IB course. For each of these measures, WEC excluded students missing demographic information. Students who were in more than one school are represented once only when we report the statistics at the state level and for subgroups other than
locale description. When we computed the statistics for different locale descriptions, if a student was in
two different schools and if those schools had two different values for locale description, the student
entered in the computation of the statistics for both locale descriptions. Potentially a student could
enter the computation of a statistic in a given year up to four times if the students went to at least four
different schools and if all four schools belonged to a different locale description category. If all the
schools attended have the same value for the locale description, the student entered the computation
only once.

**Short-term outcome measures**

Short-term outcome measures include attendance rate and suspension rate. Attendance rate
information came from the attendance file. Certain schools within this file provided attendance
information with values outside what is reasonable. Thus, we removed a school when all its students
had an attendance rate strictly less than 90 percent. This resulted in 57 schools such schools across all
three years. Like in output measures, some students attend more than one school; hence, individual
students could appear in more than one locale description subgroup if their schools had different values
for locale description. The metric for attendance rate used in this evaluation is the total number of days
attended from all students in a subgroup divided by the total number of possible days of attendance
from all students in that subgroup.

Suspension information came from the suspensions file. The suspension rate here is defined as the
percentage of students who have at least one out of school suspension. Since this file only included
students with suspension information, students from the attributes file were included as well to ensure
an accurate number of non-suspension students. Additionally, students in the suspensions file could
appear in more than one school and as a result, an individual student could appear in more than one
subgroup.

**Intermediate-term outcome measures**

Intermediate-term outcomes measures include ACT performance, ACT WorkKeys performance, AP exam
performance, dropout rate, and post-secondary enrollment. ACT performance information came from
the ACT results file. The metric for ACT performance used is the percentage of students who took all
subjects of the ACT (English, math, reading, and science) that scored above the college ready threshold
in at least three of the four subjects.

ACT WorkKeys performance information came from the ACT WorkKeys results file. The WorkKeys results
file includes information on level scores for each of its three subjects: applied mathematics, locating
information, and reading for information. In order to earn a Silver ACT National Career Readiness
Certificate, a student needs to have a level score of at least four in each of the three subjects. This
translates to qualifying for 69 percent of the jobs in the ACT database.2 Thus, the metric for ACT
WorkKeys performance used in this evaluation is the percentage of students taking all subjects of the
ACT WorkKeys who score at level four or higher on all three subjects.

AP exam performance information came from the AP exam results file. The metric for AP exam
performance is the percentage of all AP exams taken that resulted in a score of three or higher. Since
students could take an AP exam at different schools, an individual student could appear in more than
one subgroup.

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information.
Dropout rate information came from the exit codes file. This file contained multiple records for individual students within a year. To ensure an accurate exit code for each individual student, this evaluation only used the most recent code associated with each student per year. The metric for dropout rate is defined as the number of students dropping out divided by the number of students completing the term and dropping out. This evaluation categorized a student as dropping out for a given year if the student does not appear in the student attribute file the following year and if the student has an exit code with one of the following values: “Expected Transfer to Another School Covered by WSLS: Not known to be continuing,” “Interstate Move. Not known to be continuing,” or “Other Dropout or Possible Dropout.” Students completing the term had all other exit codes with the exception of “Below Compulsory Age,” “Death,” “International Move. Not known to be continuing,” and “Maximum Age for Services” – the evaluation excluded students with these four exit codes from this analysis. Since those calculations required data for two consecutive school years, dropout rate can only be reported for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years.

Post-secondary enrollment information came from the post-secondary enrollment file generated by the National Student Clearinghouse. The post-secondary enrollment file contained multiple records for individual students within a year. First, we excluded records of post-secondary enrollment prior to high school graduation. Then, we only kept the record with the earliest date within a year. The post-secondary enrollment metric for each year is computed by adding the number of students who are enrolled in a postsecondary institution the fall following high school completion and dividing it by the number of students who completed high school. The number of students completing high school came from the high school completion file. As the post-secondary enrollment file from DPI only included information for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years, we only report those two school years.
Appendix H – Baseline ACP Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs: Advanced Course Enrollment Rate
(The percentage of students who have taken at least one advanced or honors level course)

Advanced Course Enrollment Rate, All Students

Advanced Course Enrollment Rate, Economically Disadvantaged Students

Advanced Course Enrollment Rate, non-Economically Disadvantaged Students
Advanced Course Enrollment Rate, Pacific Islander Students

Advanced Course Enrollment Rate, Students of Two or More Races

Advanced Course Enrollment Rate, White Students
Outputs: AP/IB Enrollment Rate
(The percentage of students who have taken at least one AP and/or IB class)

AP/IB Enrollment Rate, All Students

AP/IB Enrollment Rate, Economically Disadvantaged Students

AP/IB Enrollment Rate, non-Economically Disadvantaged Students

Grade 9  Grade 10  Grade 11  Grade 12

AP/IB Enrollment Rate, African-American Students

AP/IB Enrollment Rate, American Indian Students

AP/IB Enrollment Rate, Asian Students

AP/IB Enrollment Rate, Hispanic Students
Short-Term Outcomes: Attendance Rate

Attendance Rate, Grades 6-8, All Students

Attendance Rate, Grades 9-12, All Students

Attendance rate, Grades 6-8, Economically Disadvantaged Students

Attendance rate, Grades 9-12, Economically Disadvantaged Students
Attendance Rate, Grades 6-8, Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students

Attendance Rate, Grades 9-12, Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students

Attendance Rate, Grades 6-8, ELL Students

Attendance Rate, Grades 9-12, ELL Students
Attendance Rate, Grades 6-8, African-American Students*

Attendance Rate, Grades 9-12, African-American Students*

*Note the different y-axis scale.

Attendance Rate, Grades 6-8, American Indian Students

Attendance Rate, Grades 9-12, American Indian Students
Short-Term Outcomes: Out-of-school Suspension Rate

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, All Students

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, All Students

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, Economically Disadvantaged Students

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, Economically Disadvantaged Students
Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, ELL Students

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, ELL Students
Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, Non-ELL Students

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, Non-ELL Students
Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, African-American Students*

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, African-American Students*

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, American Indian Students

Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, American Indian Students

*Note the different y-axis scale.
### Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, Students of Two or More Races

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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### Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, Students of Two or More Races

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### Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 6-8, White Students

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### Out-of-school Suspension Rate, Grades 9-12, White Students

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</table>
Intermediate-Term Outcomes: ACT College Readiness Rate
(The percentage of students who are college-ready in at least three of the four subjects)

ACT College Readiness Rate, All Students

ACT College Readiness Rate, Economically Disadvantaged vs. Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students

ACT College Readiness Rate, ELL vs. Non-ELL Students

ACT College Readiness Rate, Special Ed vs. Non-Special Ed Students
ACT College Readiness Rate, By Race/Ethnicity

- African-American
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- Two or More Races
- White

ACT College Readiness Rate, By Locality

- City
- Suburb
- Town
- Rural
Intermediate-Term Outcomes: ACT WorkKeys Readiness Rate
(The percentage of students who are at level four or higher in all subjects)
Intermediate-Term Outcomes: AP Exam Passage Rate
(The percentage of AP exams passed [on which students received a score of 3 or better] of all AP exams taken)
Due to low numbers, 9th grade ELL students in 2013-14 and 2014-15, and 10th grade ELL students in 2013-14, were excluded from this analysis.

Due to low numbers, 9th grade Special Ed students in 2013-14 and 2014-15 were excluded from this analysis.

Due to low numbers, 9th grade Special Ed students in 2013-14 and 2014-15 were excluded from this analysis.
***Due to low numbers, 9th grade African-American Indian students in 2013-14 were excluded from this analysis.

‡Note the different y-axis scale

****Due to low numbers, 9th grade American Indian students, and 10th grade American Indian students, 2013-14, were excluded from this analysis.
Note – Due to low numbers, all Pacific Islander students were excluded from this analysis.
Due to low numbers, 9th grade rural students in 2013-14 were excluded from this analysis.
Intermediate-Term Outcomes: Dropout Rate
(The percentage of students exiting school as a dropout)
*Note the different y-axis scale.*
Intermediate-Term Outcomes: Post-Secondary Enrollment Rate
(Percentage of high school graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution by the fall of the following school year)

![Graph showing post-secondary enrollment rate for all students and economically disadvantaged vs. non-economically disadvantaged students.](image-url)