



Wisconsin  
Evaluation  
Collaborative

# Academic and Career Planning Initial Implementation Year Evaluation

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Robin Worth, PhD  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
robin.worth@wisc.edu

Grant Sim  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
grant.sim@wisc.edu

Jessica Arrigoni  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
jessica.arrigoni@wisc.edu

Daniel Marlin  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
daniel.marlin@wisc.edu

Yuhe Gu  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
gu62@wisc.edu



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# Executive Summary

## ACP 2017-18 Evaluation for DPI

### Evaluation Design

#### Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent are school districts and schools implementing ACP infrastructure and activities?
2. What are the varieties of ACP infrastructure and activities across different school and district contexts?
3. What are stakeholder (administrators, school counselors, teachers, students, families) perceptions about ACP infrastructure and activities?

#### Qualitative Data

Mini Case Studies  
Interviews  
Surveys

#### Quantitative Data

Surveys  
Websearch  
Baseline data for output and outcome measures

### Key Findings

1. ACP Implementation in Wisconsin is growing.
2. Students do not always recognize the entirety of ACP.
3. Certain Powerful Practices surfaced frequently in high-implementation schools.
4. Equitable access and equitable implementation are unclear.
5. Students sometimes misunderstand Interest Inventories, leading to loss of trust in ACP overall.
6. Staff buy-in is growing; professional development is still needed.
7. Wide variation exists in dedicated ACP time.
8. Missed communication opportunities are occurring in many districts.

### Infrastructural Elements

1. Inclusive culture with engagement, goals, and participation
2. Engagement of families
3. Student relationships with adults (advisors, mentors, etc.)
4. Education and career advising
5. Equitable access to all ACP opportunities
6. Dedicated time for ACP activities
7. ACP curriculum (scope and sequence)
8. Programs of Study

### Student Activity Components

1. Work-based learning
2. Dual-credit, AP, IB, and college-level industry certification courses
3. Students set, modify and update goals
4. Students choose courses applicable to their ACP/career goals

### Recommendations

- Support family engagement efforts with resources.
- Conduct further research into how much family engagement is desirable or “appropriate.”
- Communicate the “big picture” of ACP.
- Promote the Powerful Practices.
- Investigate decision-making practices around financially constrained choices.
- Develop and disseminate talking points/PD around student reactions to Interest Inventory career suggestions.
- Further investigate the construct of “schoolwide culture” of ACP.
- Provide accessible, targeted PD for teachers and message leadership to promote buy-in and participation.
- Conduct evaluation and research around ACP “dosage.”
- Provide additional guidance around district ACP communication plans

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## Introduction

The following is the final report for the Year 2 (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 formative feedback via an evaluation for two and a half years (March 2016 to August 2018) for the ACP pilot and statewide implementation process. 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. Year 2 focused on further preparation for the statewide roll-out and in Year 3 (2017-18), statewide implementation began.

Specifically in Year 3 of the evaluation, WEC continued to look at statewide readiness and implementation of ACP. WEC built upon the mixed methods evaluation that took place during Years 2 and 3, conducting statewide surveys among school and district leaders, as well as CESA ACP coordinators, to follow up on findings from the previous year, including progress made in implementation, challenges and successes, and perceptions about stakeholder awareness of and attitudes toward ACP. Educator, student, and family experiences with and perceptions of ACP were examined, and beginning baseline data was collected and analyzed on logic model outputs and outcomes in order to prepare for future longitudinal analysis. A focus on specific infrastructural elements and student activities (outputs) was initiated to understand how they are realized in various contexts, to begin to measure their prevalence, and to gather baseline data to measure possible associations between outputs and outcomes at the school and student level over time. In the future, any associations identified will potentially help to determine best practices and high leverage activities. Findings from Year 3 are also intended to inform the evaluation in Year 4 and beyond.

## Evaluation Questions

The overarching evaluation questions for the statewide implementation evaluation are the following:

1. To what extent are school districts and schools implementing ACP infrastructure and activities?
2. What are the varieties of ACP infrastructure and activities across different school and district contexts?
3. What are stakeholder (administrators, school counselors, teachers, students, families) perceptions about ACP infrastructure and activities?
4. What, if any, changes have occurred in terms of student outcome data compared to baseline data?
5. What, if any, associations between ACP elements and outcomes can be measured at school or student levels?

The specific infrastructure elements and student activities of interest, referred to in Evaluation Questions 1-3, are the following:

*Infrastructural elements:*

1. An inclusive schoolwide culture with administrative engagement, prioritized goals, staff participation and which is student-focused.
2. Regular and ongoing informing of and engaging families in their students' ACP.
3. Regular and ongoing supportive and safe student relationships with adults.
4. Non-judgmental, informed, comprehensive education and career advising.
5. Equitable access to all ACP opportunities.
6. Regular, ongoing and dedicated time for ACP activities.
7. Outlined ACP activity curriculum that is scaffolded and developmentally appropriate (scope and sequence).
8. Programs of Study identified by district.

*Student activity components*

1. Student participation in work-based learning activities.
2. Students taking dual credit, AP, IB and college level industry certification courses.
3. Students utilize knowledge and skills gained through ACP activity participation to set, modify, and update personal, education and career goals.
4. Students choose CTE and academic courses applicable to their ACP/career goals.

## Methodology

To address the evaluation questions, WEC evaluators designed a study comprised of 6 components:

1. School-level survey of principals
2. Survey of CESA ACP coordinators
3. Search and analysis of school and district websites
4. Mini case studies in 5 high-implementation schools
5. Phone interviews with district leaders in low-implementation schools
6. Outputs and outcomes data

### School-Level Survey of Principals

WEC evaluators developed and programmed a web-based survey in Qualtrics intended to gather information statewide from principals of schools with any grades 6 through 12. The purpose of the survey was to collect information related to ACP implementation during the first full year of statewide implementation. Specific areas of interest were ACP infrastructure and engagement, perceptions of ACP awareness and knowledge, ACP component implementation, and ACP resources that may be helpful for districts and schools.

WEC opened the survey on November 29, 2017 and DPI sent it to 1,262 school and district contacts across the state. The survey closed on December 14, 2017. Of those sent, 428 responded to the survey and 323 completed the survey for a response rate of 34 percent and a completion rate of 76 percent.

Key findings are included throughout this report. For the full survey report, please refer to *Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results*, March 5, 2018.

### Survey of CESA ACP Coordinators

WEC evaluators also developed and programmed a web-based survey intended to gather information statewide from ACP coordinators at each of the state's 12 Cooperative Education Service Agencies (CESAs). The purpose of this survey was to collect information related to ACP implementation from an informed perspective outside districts and schools. Specific areas of interest were levels of implementation across the state and the identification of potentially useful ACP resources for districts and schools. The information collected was intended to supplement school-level survey findings, as well as the school/district website searches described below, and connect data found through these sources.

WEC opened the survey on November 29, 2017 and DPI sent it to the ACP coordinators in all 12 CESA regions. The survey closed on December 14, 2017. Of those who were sent the survey, 13 responded. With at least one respondent from each of the 12 CESAs (one CESA had two respondents), the response and completion rates were 100 percent. Key findings are included throughout this report. For the full survey report, please refer to *Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year CESA Survey Results*, March 9, 2018.

### School/District Websearch

A stratified random sample of schools containing any of grades 6-12 across the state (by CESA region) was selected in order to search schools' websites for information about ACP. To account for variation in local ACP infrastructure and student activities, school websites (and when needed, corresponding district websites) were searched for evidence and descriptions of these elements and activities. The results were intended to provide a general idea of the extent of communication about ACP activities. Moreover, these results, together with the statewide survey data, informed the selection of the case study districts, and also served as a means to help contextualize the data from case studies.

The sample of 286 schools represented 25-26 percent of schools in each CESA. The search of these schools' websites was conducted from October 2017 to November 2017. Two researchers searched the school websites by utilizing website search function and by screening websites thoroughly for information about ACP, specific to the 8 infrastructural elements and the 4 student activity components. Details of findings were recorded in a spreadsheet for later analysis. Inter-coder consistency tests were conducted by other evaluation team members at two intervals during the search and coding process, and results showed a high level of consistency. Key findings from the websearch are included throughout this report. For the full websearch report, please refer to *Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School Websearch Findings*, July 20, 2018.

### School Mini Case Studies

WEC researchers identified schools reporting high levels of ACP implementation using index scores created from school-level survey responses. The index scores were based on survey items on stages of ACP infrastructure implementation, student ACP activities, levels of awareness and engagement, and stakeholder perceptions. The indices included: Collaboration, Knowledge, Staff Awareness, Student Awareness, Staff Beliefs, Family Beliefs, District Priorities, and Implementation. School index scores were used to rank schools by self-reported implementation level. The 15 highest-ranking schools whose respondents agreed to be contacted for further follow-up were selected for possible inclusion in the

case studies. Two schools were excluded since they had previously been part of prior ACP evaluation cases studies. The remaining 13 schools were divided by geographic areas of the state and further categorized by size (enrollment) and school type (rural, town, or suburban).<sup>1</sup> School leaders were contacted by email to invite them to participate in a telephone interview to probe deeper into their survey responses, and subsequently to have a portion of their staff, students and family members participate in focus groups to gather more information and additional perspectives. Ultimately, 5 schools from around the state, distributed across 4 CESA regions, agreed to participate, of which 4 were small rural high or middle/high schools and 1 was a medium-sized suburban school. It is important to note that schools at both extremes of the overall rankings were predominantly small, rural schools. This idea is explored further in the findings section of this report.

Case studies of the selected districts included a review of their survey findings to inform the customization of the general protocol for interviewing school leader(s) (typically the principal and/or the ACP coordinator; for the general school leader interview protocol, see Appendix A). These interviews, conducted over the telephone in advance of the visit, generally lasted about 30 minutes, and were audio-recorded for note-taking purposes with the permission of the participants. Interviewees were promised confidentiality, and that audio-recordings would be used strictly to clean up notes and/or create transcriptions and then be deleted. Notes and transcriptions were analyzed and coded by theme, and findings were also used, in combination with survey and websearch findings, to customize protocols for focus groups of students, teachers, and family members (for general focus group protocols, see Appendix B). Focus groups and other data collection activities at each site were also audio recorded for note-taking purposes, transcripts were created and audio recordings were then deleted. Transcripts were analyzed and coded for common themes. Table 1 shows the data collection activities in each case study site. Pseudonyms were used for each case study site to maintain confidentiality.

*Table 1: Case Study Data Collection Methods*

<b>Site</b>	<b>School details</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Student focus groups</b>	<b>Teacher/ staff focus groups</b>	<b>Family Focus groups</b>	<b>Other data collection methods</b>
Garfield Junior/ Senior High School	Small rural combined middle and high school in CESA 10	1 with 2 principals and the ACP Coordinator	1 with high school juniors, 1 with 8 <sup>th</sup> graders	1	1	Artifact and document analysis, tour of facilities
Johnson Middle & High School	Small rural combined middle and high school in CESA 2	Superintendent/ Principal	1 with 8 <sup>th</sup> graders, 1 with high school juniors	1 with teachers, 1 with school counselors	1	Artifact and document analysis

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<sup>1</sup> No urban schools were among those that were both high in implementation scores and willing to participate in further study.

McKinley High School	Medium-sized suburban high school in CESA 2	1 with Principal and School to Career Coordinator	1 with high school juniors and senior	1	1	Artifacts and document analysis, observation of seniors' final portfolio presentation interviews
Niceville Senior High School	Small rural high school in CESA 8	School Counselor/ACP Coordinator	1 with 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> graders	1	1	Artifact and document analysis and tour of facilities
Sunnydale Area High School	Small rural high school in CESA 9	District-level ACP coordinator	1 group middle school students, 2 groups high school students	2	1	Artifact and document analysis and tour of facilities

**Phone Interviews with School Leaders**

In addition to looking at ACP activities in high implementation schools, WEC conducted interviews with school leaders among schools that, by their own reports, had low levels of ACP implementation. This was done to help identify and better understand barriers to implementation. To that end, leaders of schools with the lowest survey mean index implementation scores, and who indicated willingness to be further interviewed, were contacted by email to arrange a follow-up phone call interview. Emails were sent to 6 potential participants, with follow-up emails sent several days later, and ultimately, 2 school leaders agreed to be interviewed. These school leaders, from Bloomdale High School and Morningside High School (pseudonyms), were both principals, with one also serving as the district's superintendent. Both schools were located in small rural districts, one in South Central Wisconsin and one in Southwestern Wisconsin. Participants were again promised confidentiality, and their interviews were audio-recorded for note-taking purposes, transcribed, analyzed and coded by theme (for protocol, see Appendix C).

**Outputs and Outcomes Data**

To evaluate the implementation of certain ACP infrastructural and student activity components, WEC requested and received statewide data for the years 2013-14 through 2016-17. In addition, WEC continued to receive data through 2016-17 related to ACP outputs and outcomes. These data include:

- Outputs
  - Student participation in work-based learning activities
  - Student enrollment in dual enrollment and college level industry certification courses
- Short-term outcomes
  - Attendance rates
  - Suspension rates

- Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS) scores
- Intermediate outcomes
  - ACT scores
  - WorkKeys scores
  - AP exam results
  - Dropout rates
  - Graduation rates
  - Youth Risk Behavior Survey results
- Long-term outcomes
  - Post-secondary enrollment

The majority of these sources of data cover the entire state of Wisconsin, but for a few of the above data sources, there were restrictions on the student population. For student participation in work-based learning activities, student enrollment in dual-credit, and student enrollment in college level industry certification courses, the data source that provides these results, the Career and Technical Education Enrollment Reporting System (CTEERS) only contains information for eleventh and twelfth grade students. Additionally, the data on work-based learning activities and college level industry certifications is only for students who are Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators (students that complete a minimum of two CTE courses within a pathway and enroll in a continuing CTE course in that same pathway). Further, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey is not given to every school in the state.

In addition to these sources, WEC also requested Career Cruising information, but as of the time of this report, had not yet received these data. Since data availability restricted the most recent year to 2016-17, WEC will continue to track ACP outcomes, but will not report on any ACP outcome results until 2017-18 data are available. Similarly, while 2017-18 student-level implementation data are not available, this report will provide information on the state of ACP outputs through 2016-17.

For each of these measures, the evaluation aligned calculations to similar practices used by DPI when possible. However, in some cases, our results will differ from those that are publicly reported. This is due to variations in available data and differences in inclusion criteria.

### [Alignment Between Evaluation Questions and Data Sources](#)

Table 2 is a crosswalk of the various data collection methods with outputs and evaluation questions:

Table 2: Crosswalk of Data Collection Methods, Outputs, and Evaluation Questions

Data Collection Method	Outputs Examined											Evaluation Question(s) Addressed
	School-wide culture	Family engagement	Student relationships	Career advising	Equitable access	Dedicated ACP time	ACP curriculum	Work-based learning	Dual credit/certifications	Education and career goals	Applicable course taking	
Surveys												
-Principal survey	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	1, 2, 3
-Local ACP coordinators	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	1, 2, 3
-CESA ACP coordinators	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	1, 2, 3
Website search	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					1, 2
Case studies												
-Principal interviews	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	2, 3
-Counselor interviews	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	2, 3
-Teacher focus groups	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	2, 3
-Student focus groups	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	2, 3
-Parent focus groups/interviews	√	√			√			√	√	√	√	2, 3
-Document analysis		√				√	√					2
Output data collection		√			√		√	√	√	√	√	1, 5
Outcome data collection												1, 4, 5

### Limitations

There are limitations to the extent to which findings in this evaluation can be generalized. The somewhat small response rate (34 percent) for the principal survey suggests that findings should be interpreted with caution; it may be that many respondents are engaging less intensively in ACP activities than those who chose to report their work. The websearch reports only information found on school/district websites at a particular period of time (fall of the first year of required implementation), and websites are subject to change, updating and revision; it is likely that many districts have added additional ACP-related information to their websites since the time of the data collection. Moreover,

websearch data only reflects information about ACP work that was communicated on the website. Certainly there is more work being done than is reflected on websites, but the difference between what is being done and what is being communicated cannot be easily determined. 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 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, while providing authentic descriptions and perceptions of ACP work in the field by those actors experiencing the phenomena in question.

All output measures provided in this report are contingent upon available data. Additionally, results on these measures should only be used for later comparison to outputs 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 publicly reported by DPI due to differences in data availability and calculation practices. For all purposes other than ACP evaluation use, publicly reported data from DPI should take priority in standing.

## Findings

In this section, we present data and findings for the first three evaluation questions, organized according to the key infrastructural elements and student activities, followed by some additional feedback that did not apply directly to any of those elements or activities.

### Evaluation Question #1: To what extent are school districts and schools implementing ACP infrastructure and activities?

The findings under this question focus on the extent to which ACP is being implemented in the state. Questions 2 and 3 focus on variations on the infrastructural elements and student activities, and stakeholders' perceptions about them.

#### Infrastructural elements.

*An inclusive school wide culture with administrative engagement, prioritized goals, staff participation and which is student-focused.*

All case study districts appear to have implemented ACP in a student-focused manner with staff buy-in. Teachers at Garfield indicated that ACP serves teachers as well as students by helping them understand their students' interests. At Niceville, ACP is viewed as a "process" and "journey" for students to identify interests and possible career or college pathways. While students at middle and high school grades participated in ACP, across schools, older students tended to see the benefits of ACP more than younger students.

Two schools (McKinley and Sunnydale) reported that a few staff members drive ACP implementation, leaving these districts vulnerable to inconsistency and potential weakening of ACP should personnel changes occur. At McKinley, the work-based learning coordinator arranges ACP activities such as job shadowing and provides PD to teachers on ACP, while another teaches a popular financial literacy course. At Sunnydale, the guidance counselor is largely responsible for implementation of ACP.

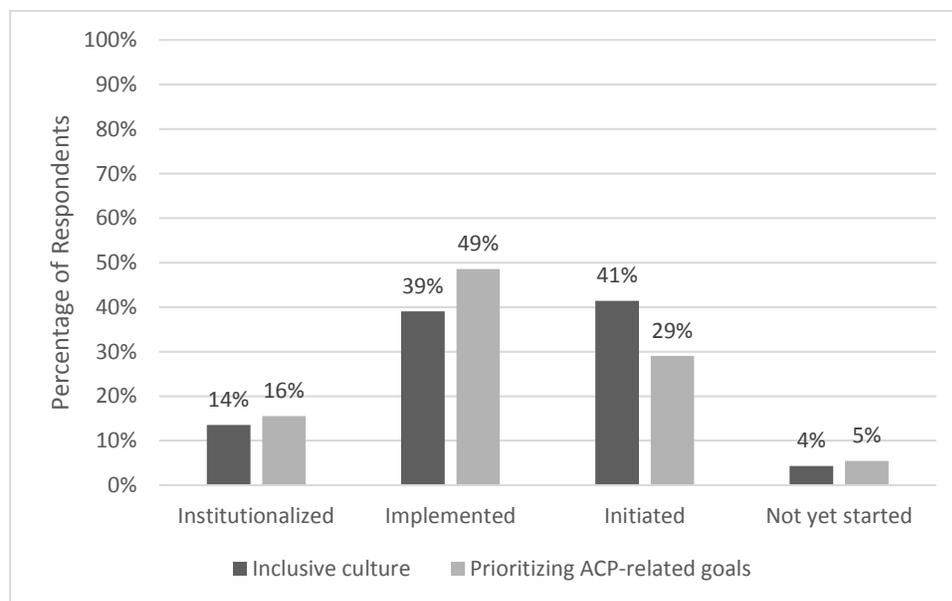
Administrative engagement was strong at all the high-implementation case study districts, while the school leaders who were interviewed from the low-implementation districts were often unable to

provide details about their schools' ACP work; they were unfamiliar with the scope and sequence, DPI website resources, PD efforts or other specifics, generally reporting that these were concerns of the counselors or other staff members. In the high-implementation districts, principals and other school leaders were familiar with details and able to answer all the questions in the interview protocol. While the number of schools making up this sample is small, this pattern nonetheless appears to support the importance of strong administrative engagement for effective implementation. Similarly, CESA survey respondents listed lack of capacity or support from leadership and lack of district prioritization as predominant barriers for implementation at the low-implementation schools in their regions. One CESA respondent also pointed out "if there is no administrative support, it's difficult for a school district to attend ACP trainings provided by DPI, CESA or an outside source."

Interviews with administrators from low-implementation schools revealed low levels of staff and student buy-in for the ACP process. Teachers' frustrations with additional responsibilities, viewing ACP as "the counselors' job," and challenges in making ACP "meaningful" to kids were all cited as reasons for low levels of buy-in.

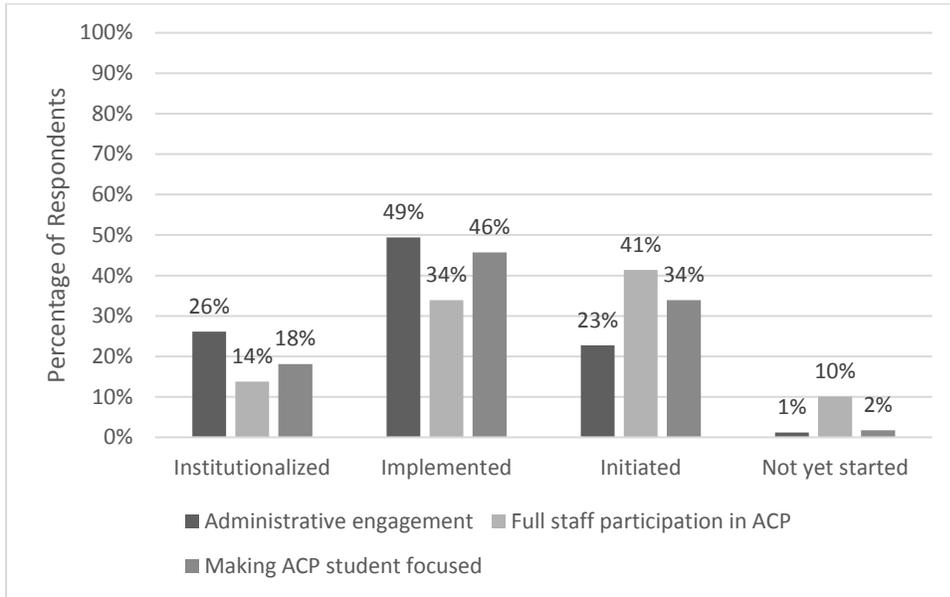
School-level survey results also provide some insight into the levels of ACP infrastructure implementation during 2017-18. While the response rate to the survey was approximately 34 percent, there was wide coverage of responses from throughout the state giving the possibility for a higher degree of generalizability. Several of the items on this survey examined the level of inclusive school wide culture. All of these items inquired as to level of implementation in a respondent's school with response options ranging from "institutionalized" to "not yet started." Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the results from these items. As these figures illustrate, a majority of respondents indicated that they either implemented or institutionalized ACP inclusive culture, prioritization of ACP goals, administrative engagement, and student-focused ACP. One area that respondents thought had less implementation was full staff participation in ACP with 41 percent indicating this element was at the initiating stage.

Figure 1: Implementation of ACP Inclusive Culture and Prioritized ACP Goals



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

Figure 2: Implementation of ACP Administrative Engagement, ACP Staff Participation, and Student-Focused ACP



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

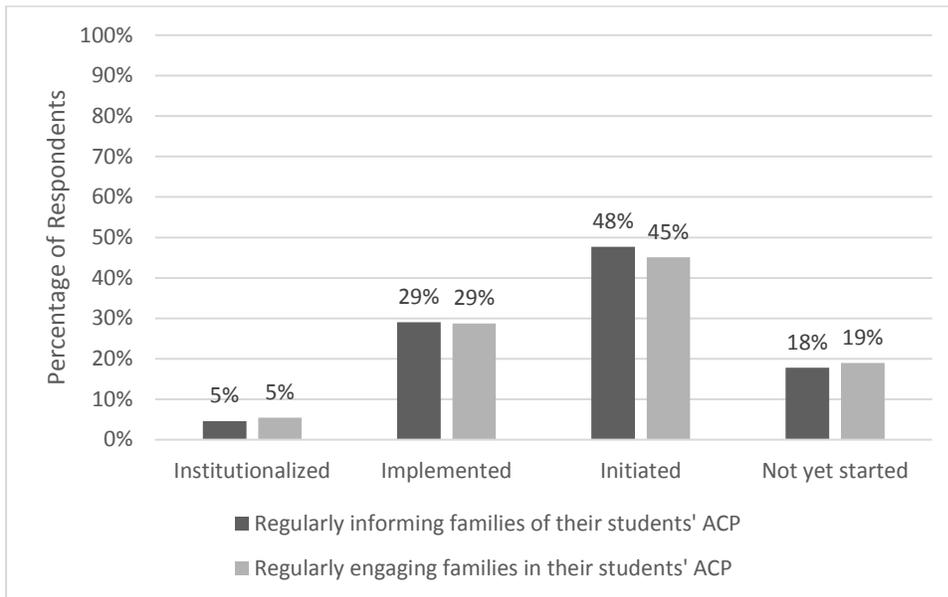
*Regular and ongoing informing of and engaging families in their students’ ACP.*

Family engagement and communication efforts varied by case study school. Generally, parents knew that their children participate in ACP, and they understood its purpose. Parents received information regarding ACP via e-mails, conferences, and social media posts (“[McKinley] is on Facebook and Twitter, if you don’t see it you’re not looking”). In a few of the schools, parents mentioned that they are aware of how they could track students’ ACP activities, such as using Career Cruising’s parent portal. However, many of the parents in our case study indicated that they had not taken advantage of such opportunities. In particular, Niceville identified parent engagement as a weakness and has developed goals for the 2018-19 school year to address it.

School websites are another platform to inform parents about the details of the school’s ACP plan. More than half of the schools (53 percent) in the sample presented ACP-relevant information on their websites or their district websites. The information displayed on school websites indicated that in addition to information on websites, ways to engage and inform families also included parent-teacher conferences, ACP informational events, and email/mail of ACP-related information.

Figure 3 shows the results from the school-level survey of principals related to family engagement. While there are nearly equal levels of informing families and engaging families on ACP, the majority of respondents indicated that they either had not started these elements of ACP or were just initiating these elements.

Figure 3: Implementation of ACP Family Engagement



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

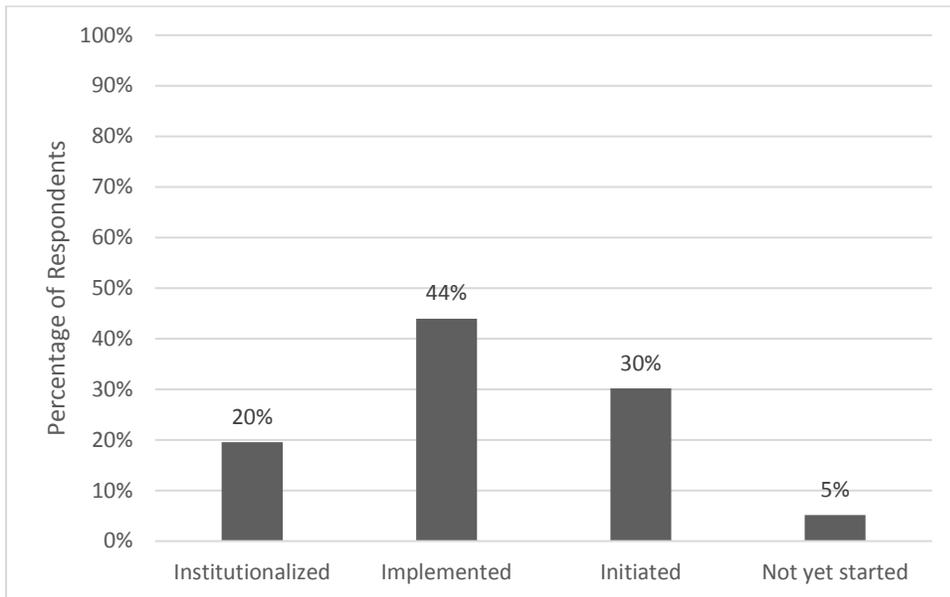
*Regular and ongoing supportive and safe student relationships with adults.*

Interviewees reported improved student-adult relationships at most of the case study districts and schools. Dedicated ACP time at Niceville provides teachers the opportunity to have conversations with all of their students, develop goals, and discuss grades and future plans, including with students who tend to “fly under the radar.” Students at Niceville stay with the same advisor throughout high school. Niceville also provides time for mentoring in its ACP Plan. McKinley also seemed to support strong teacher-student relationships; to illustrate, one McKinley teacher said that “I’ve had questions from kids in my homeroom, maybe twice, they’ve emailed me ‘I have a question about something not about ACP,’ about something unrelated to ACP, unrelated to homeroom.” Relationships between students and adults can also be cultivated outside of school through activities such as job-shadowing and mock interviews.

In some case study districts and schools, more activities could be developed to better foster these relationships. For instance, at Garfield, teachers indicated that students share their career goals with teachers more frequently, though students reported that they “talk to the guidance counselor” about college and career options. Students at Johnson suggested requiring students to interface more often with teachers and counselors. At Sunnydale, students tended to make appointments with the counselor for one-on-one advising needs even though they have dedicated advisors and advisory time.

Similar to many of the case study districts, respondents to the school-level survey indicated implementation of supportive and safe student relationships with adults in the school. As Figure 4 shows, 64 percent of respondents thought their school had either institutionalized or implemented this ACP element.

Figure 4: Implementation of Supportive and Safe Student Relationships with Adults



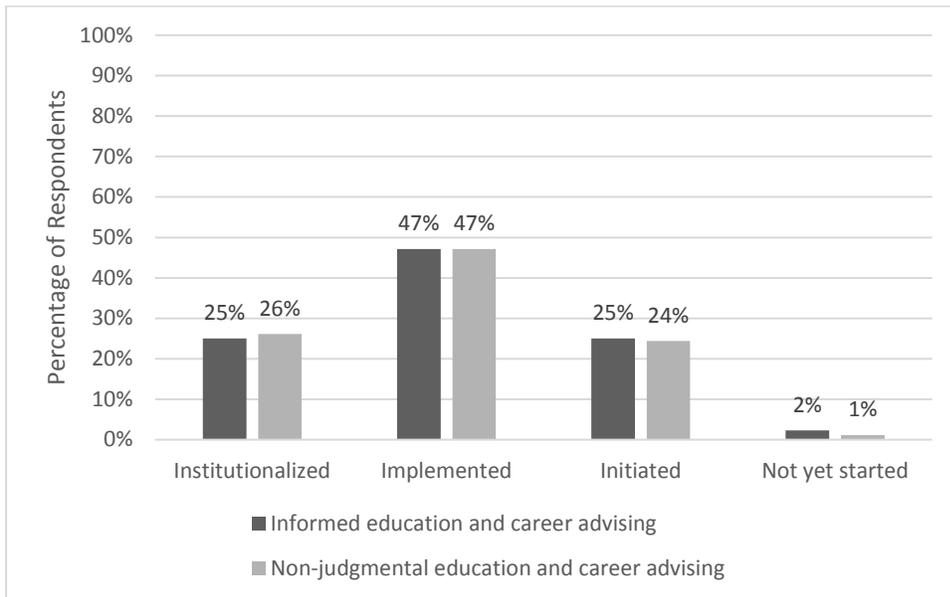
Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

*Non-judgmental, informed, comprehensive education and career advising.*

For the most part, case study districts and schools were intentional about catering the ACP experience to all students, even those who do not intend to attend college after graduation. Students enjoyed activities such as job-shadowing (especially at Johnson) and reported that they can change their postsecondary plans without objection. A teacher at Sunnydale indicated that the school has been doing a better job of including all students, even if their future plans do not include college. Student interviewees at McKinley all plan to go to college, but mentioned that for students who do not, some activities (such as writing a college entrance essay) may not seem valuable.

Results from the school-level survey of principals show relatively high levels of implementation of this ACP infrastructural element in 2017-18 as seen in Figure 5. Approximately three-quarters of respondents answered that they institutionalized or implemented informed education and career advising at their school and an equal proportion of respondents indicated similarly for non-judgmental education and career advising.

Figure 5: Implementation of Non-Judgmental and Informed Education and Career Advising



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

*Equitable access to all ACP opportunities.*

In all of the school districts visited, students, staff, and parents reported that ACP was being implemented for all students. It was reported that if necessary, special education students may have activities differentiated but no student, special education, English Language Learner (ELL), or other was excluded. A Sunnydale special education teacher reported that they’ve had

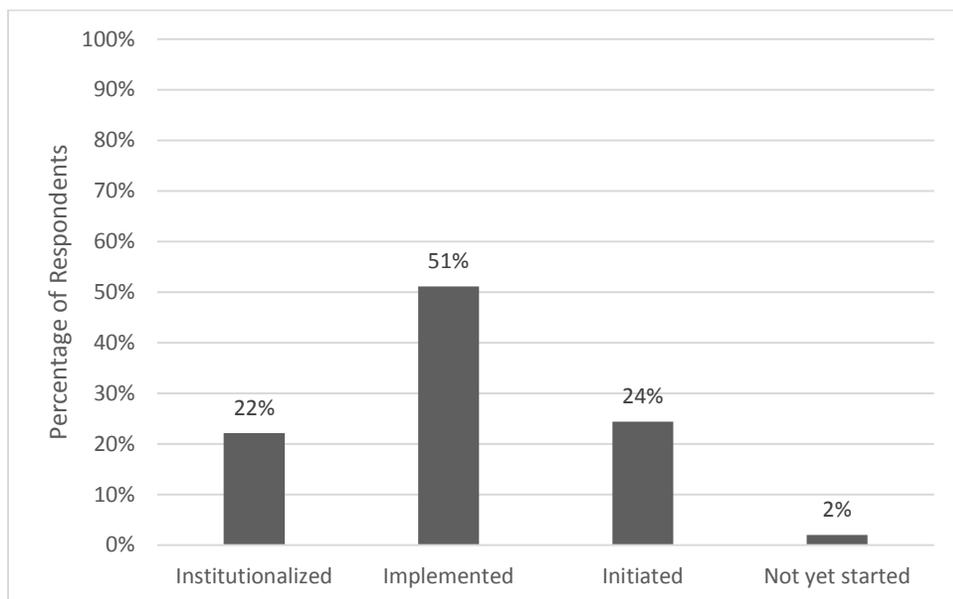
“a lot of feedback from the Department of Workforce Rehabilitation, saying that our kids [with IEPs] now have resumes, references, and work experiences and DVR has never seen such a wealth of experience before.”

In addition, all three groups of stakeholders reported that ACP was inclusive of all post-high school plans, whether it was college or career or military. In particular, teachers in Niceville discussed how they work to prepare students for four-year degrees, tech schools, the military, and ensure that they have the necessary workforce skills.

Throughout the state, many schools also indicated via the survey that they provided equitable access to all ACP opportunities. Figure 6 shows the results from the school-level survey of principals on an item related to this ACP element. As shown, 73 percent of respondents thought their school either institutionalized or implemented this practice.

As always, self-reported data should be recognized as such, particularly in terms of sensitive topics like equity. While including all students in ACP work, and honoring all post-graduation plans, is important, there is still the potential for these activities, practices, and policies to be implemented inequitably. Further research is required to better understand bias, unconscious or otherwise, that may affect the equitable implementation of ACP in districts and schools.

Figure 6: Implementation of Equitable Access to All ACP Opportunities



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

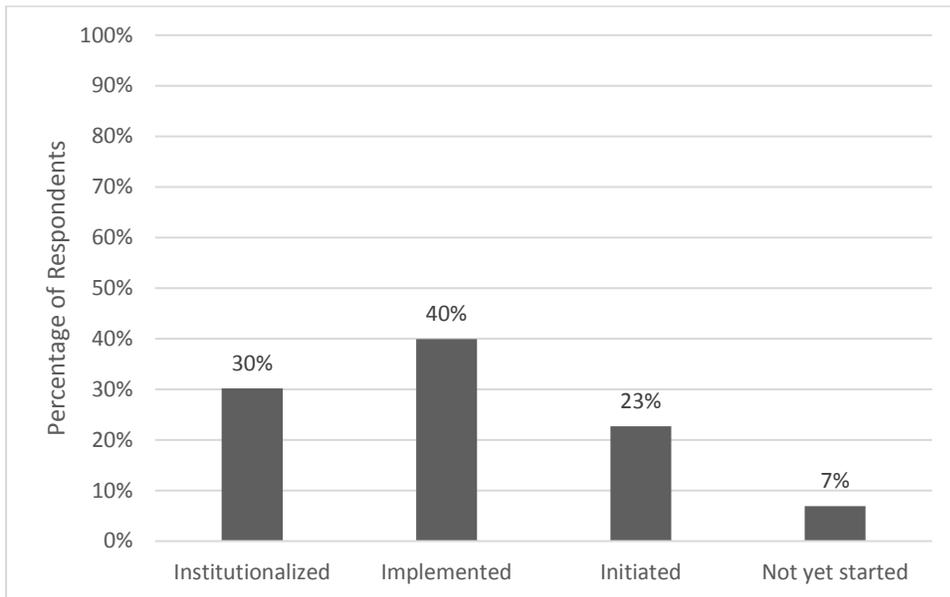
Student participation results in work-based learning activities and enrollment in dual credit and college-level industry certifications in the sections below will also highlight the extent of equitable access to ACP by providing breakdowns of participation by student subgroups. These subgroups include race/ethnicity, economic status, ELL status, and special education status. To examine the extent of equitable access by region, these later sections will also examine participation by CESA.

*Regular, ongoing and dedicated time for ACP activities.*

Each of the case study districts reported having built in dedicated time for regular, ongoing ACP activities. Additional evidence to support the importance of regular, ongoing and dedicated time for ACP came from the interviews with personnel from low-implementation schools. It is likely no coincidence that these schools reported not being successful in either engaging students or gaining buy-in from staff, and at the same time reported that they only engaged in ACP work one time per month. As one administrator said, “we had the best of intentions but it just kind of fell apart. We’ve had a couple years now with a good plan in place at the beginning of the year, but then as we go through the year it just dies.” It appears that more research is warranted regarding “dosage” of ACP to be able to make recommendations regarding best practices and minimum amounts for effectiveness, but an hour per month is likely insufficient for effective implementation.

Figure 7 shows the extent of implementation of regular, ongoing, and dedicated time for ACP activities throughout the state from the school-level survey. As this figure displays, 70 percent of respondents thought their school had institutionalized or implemented this element in the first year of ACP implementation, but the survey did not ask them to specify the amount of regular time that was dedicated to ACP. WEC recommends that these data be collected in subsequent years.

Figure 7: Implementation of Regular, Dedicated Time for ACP Activities



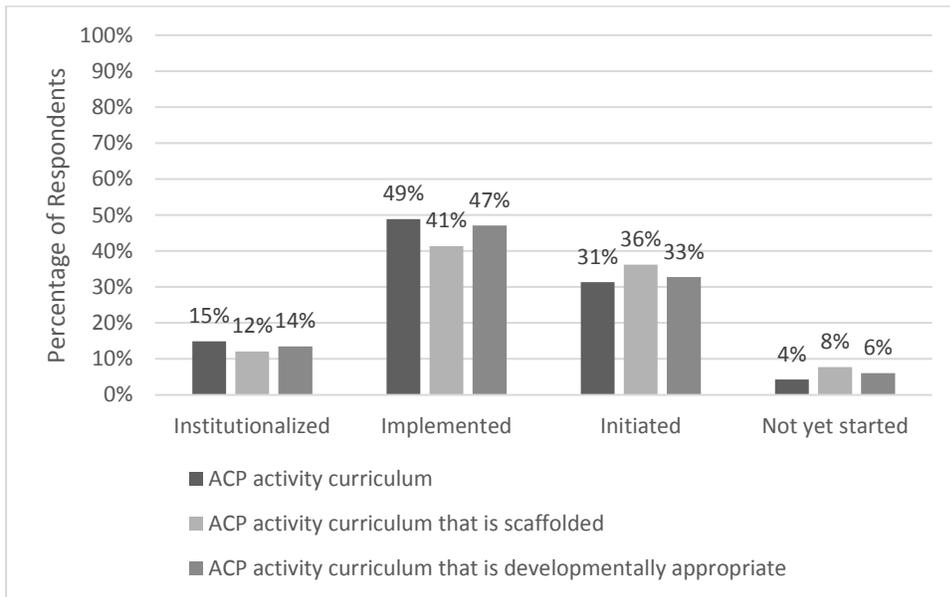
Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

*Outlined ACP activity curriculum that is scaffolded and developmentally appropriate (scope and sequence).*

Of the 286 schools in the websearch sample, 90 (31 percent) had details of the ACP activity curriculum communicated on their website. A websearch, however, does not typically provide sufficient data to be able to judge the quality of a scope and sequence, nor the extent to which it is actually being implemented. Based on conversations with the case study districts' ACP coordinators, each case study district created a scope and sequence that they believed was scaffolded and developmentally appropriate.

Roughly two-thirds of the respondents to the school-level survey provided information that their school was institutionalizing or implementing an outlined ACP activity curriculum that was developmentally appropriate, as shown in Figure 8. Just over half of respondents thought they had implemented or institutionalized an ACP activity curriculum that is scaffolded.

Figure 8: Implementation of an Outlined ACP Activity Curriculum



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

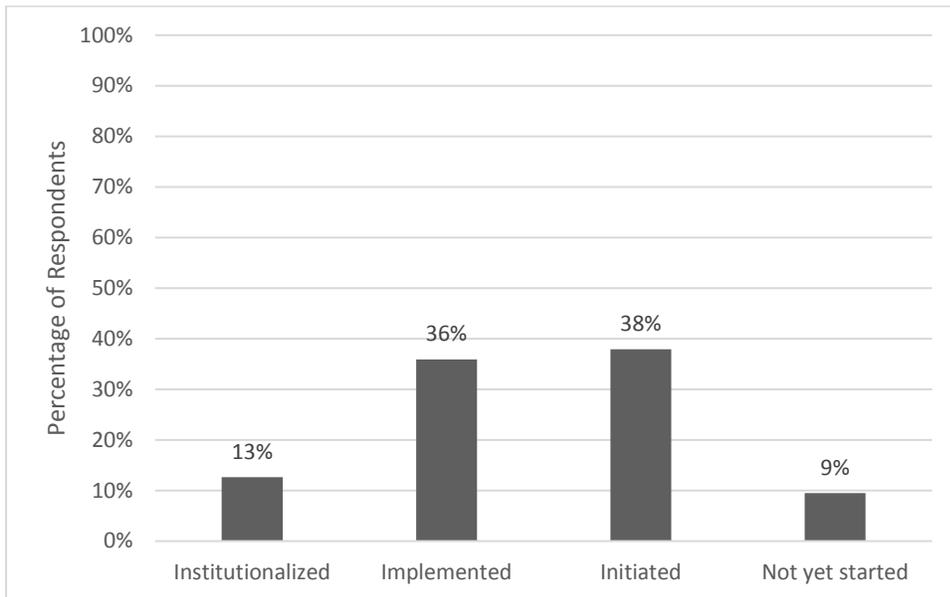
*Programs of Study identified by district.*

ACP program coordinators in case study districts were asked about their district’s Programs of Study. Many of the districts reported that Programs of Study are still in development and all stated that the programs they developed were in response to student interest and need.

Based on websearch results, there was inconsistent use of the term “program of study.” According to DPI, Programs of Study should consist of at least three sequential courses in a career pathway, opportunities for students to participate in career development activities, and an advisory committee to oversee the Programs of Study. Yet very few schools (2 of 286) showed evidence of having all three components on their websites. Many schools (54 schools) displayed evidence of having two of three components on websites, but they did not refer to them as “Programs of Study.”

Similar to the other sources of data on this element, results from the school-level survey also showed that Programs of Study were less implemented throughout the state in comparison to many of the other ACP infrastructural elements. Figure 9 displays the various levels of implementation for this element as reported from the survey. Just under half of respondents indicated that they institutionalized or implemented Programs of Study connected to career pathways.

Figure 9: Implementation of Programs of Study Connected to Career Pathways



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

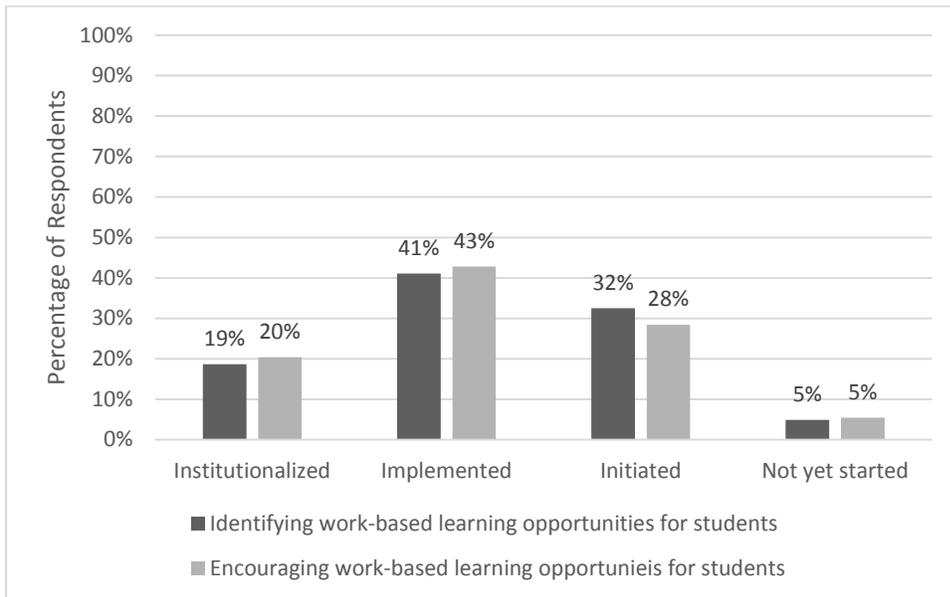
### Student activity components

#### *Student participation in work-based learning activities.*

Case study schools all reported an increase in the number of students participating in job shadows. Students at Johnson High School mentioned that they had numerous opportunities to participate in this form of work-based learning. Garfield High School interviewees also reported an increase in the number of students doing job shadows. In some districts, middle school students were already participating in job shadows, allowing them to gain insight into careers and potentially informing decisions such as high school course selection. Sunnydale Middle School familiarizes eighth-graders with their youth apprenticeship rubric, which is used in the high school, to “give them a head’s up so they can plan ahead.”

As with the infrastructural ACP elements above, the school-level survey also examined the level of implementation of several ACP student activity components. Two of the items on this survey asked about work-based learning activities, one related to the implementation of identifying these activities, and the other related to the implementation of encouraging these activities. Figure 10 shows the results from these items on the survey. As this figure shows, 60 percent of respondents indicated that their school either institutionalized or implemented the practice of identifying work-based learning opportunities for students and slightly more, 63 percent, indicated that their school institutionalized or implemented the practice of encouraging work-based learning opportunities for students.

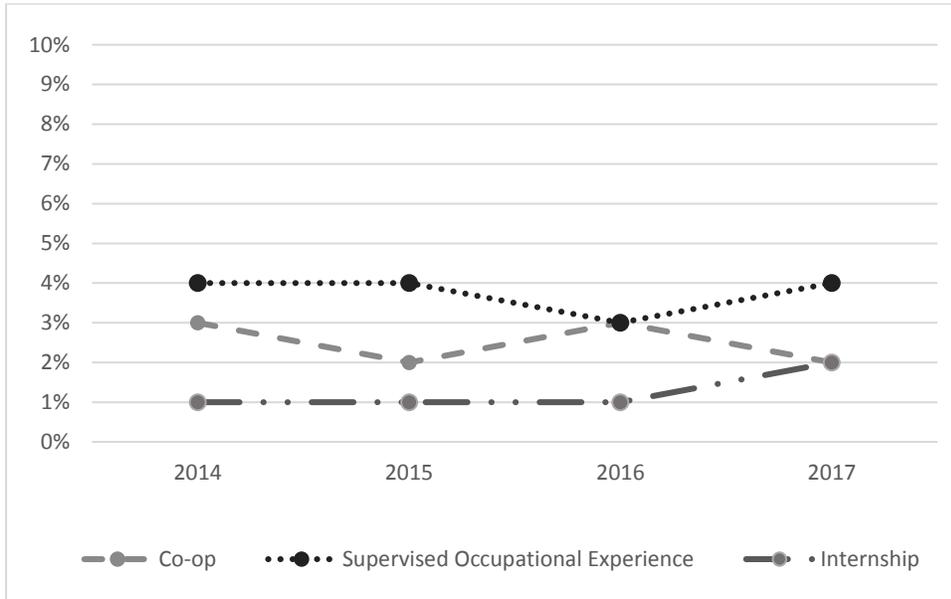
Figure 10: Implementation of Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Students



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

As a student activity component of ACP, student-level data can serve as an additional source of information as to the extent of implementation throughout the state. One available source of data related to work-based learning is CTEERS, which provides information on student participation in work-based learning opportunities for CTE concentrator students. While not ideal for evaluating the extent of participation of all students, over time, these data may illustrate trends in if participation in these activities are increasing. Figure 11 shows the percentage of these students participating in various types of *non-certificated*, work-based learning opportunities from 2013-14 to 2016-17 (the most recent year available). Certificated, work-based learning opportunities are addressed in the following student activity component. As this figure shows, approximately 1 to 2 percent of CTE concentrators participated in internships, 2 to 3 percent participated in co-ops, and 3 to 4 percent participated in supervised occupational experiences. Participation at these levels will serve as a baseline to examine the extent of increased participation after ACP implementation in 2017-18.

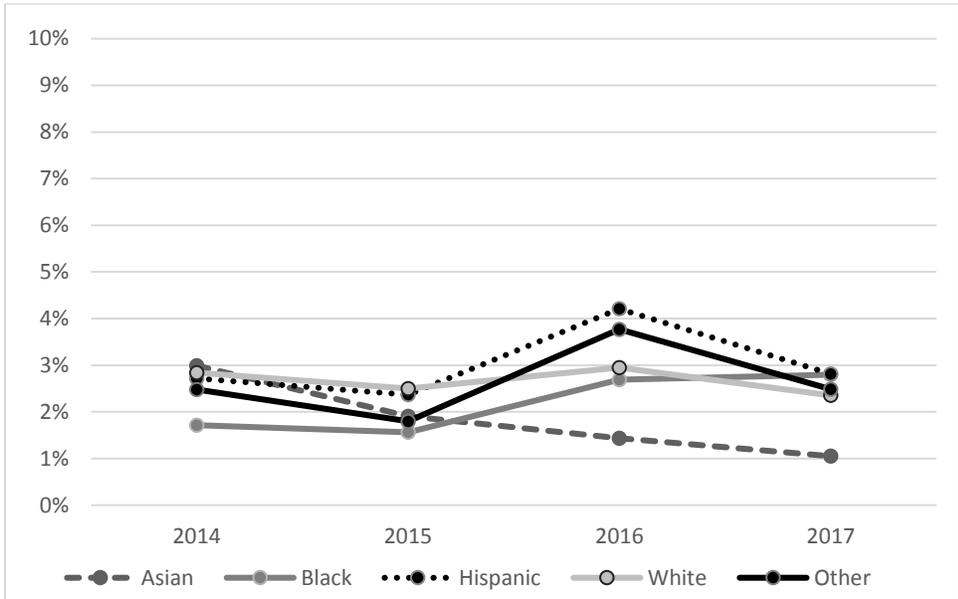
Figure 11: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in a Work-Based, Non-Certificated Learning Methodology, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

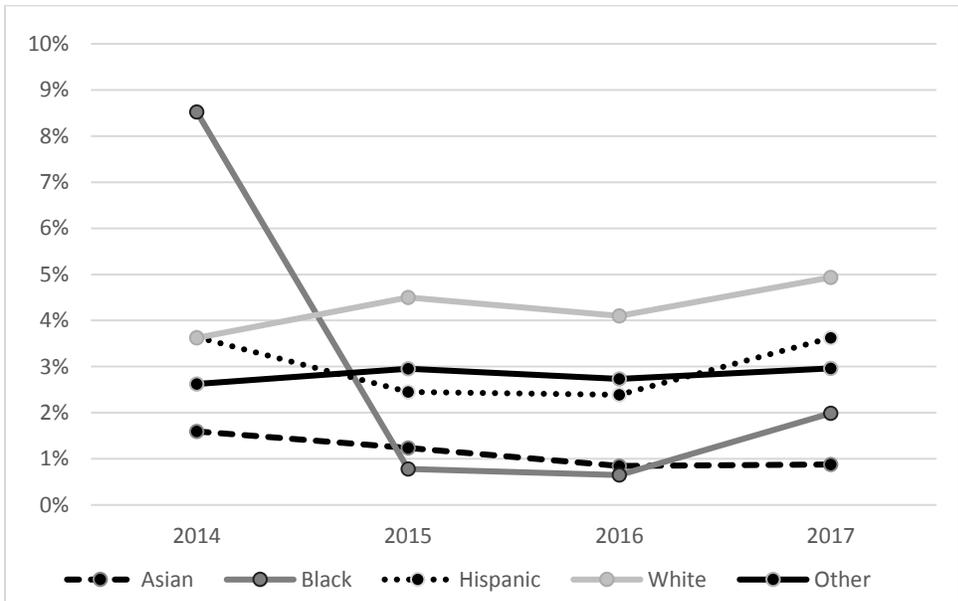
Since the CTEERS data is at the student-level, the evaluation can also examine the level of equitable participation in these activities by subgroup analyses. Figures 12 – 14 show the participation rates of CTE concentrators in co-ops, supervised occupational experiences, and internships respectively broken out by the race or ethnicity of the students. In Figure 12, while most racial/ethnic groups participated at similar rates in co-ops, Asian students participated at a slightly lower rate in more recent years. Figure 13 illustrates some differences in participation in supervised occupational experiences, with white students participating at higher rates than Asian and black students in more recent years. There appear to be little differences in the participation in internships in years leading up to ACP implementation, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 12: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Co-ops by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



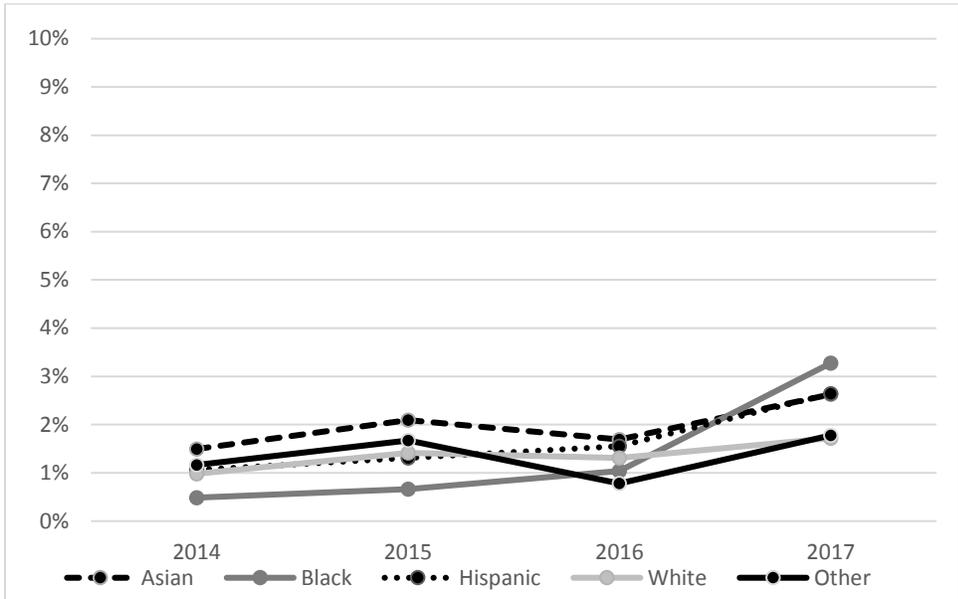
Source: CTEERS

Figure 13: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Supervised Occupational Experiences by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

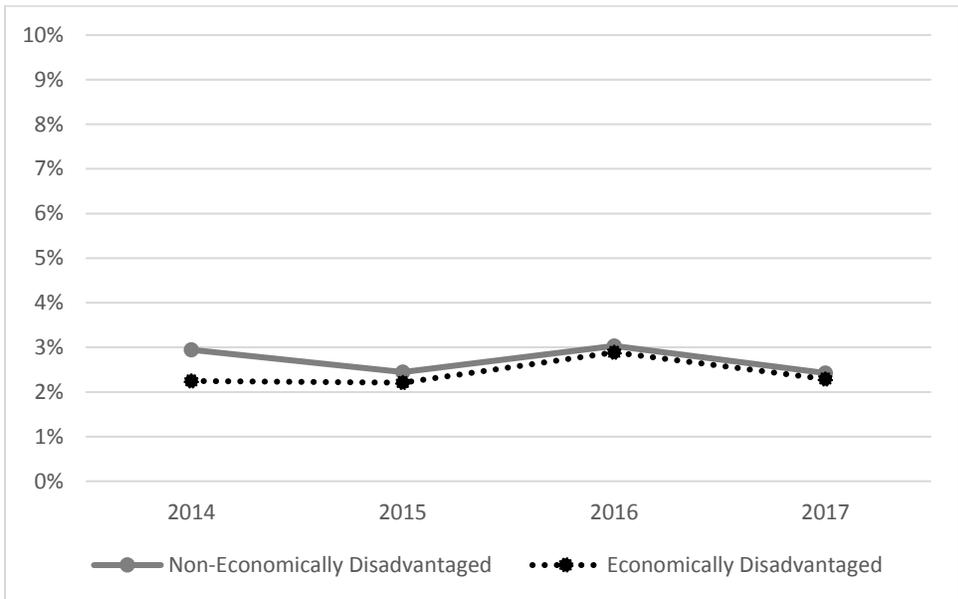
Figure 14: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Internships by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

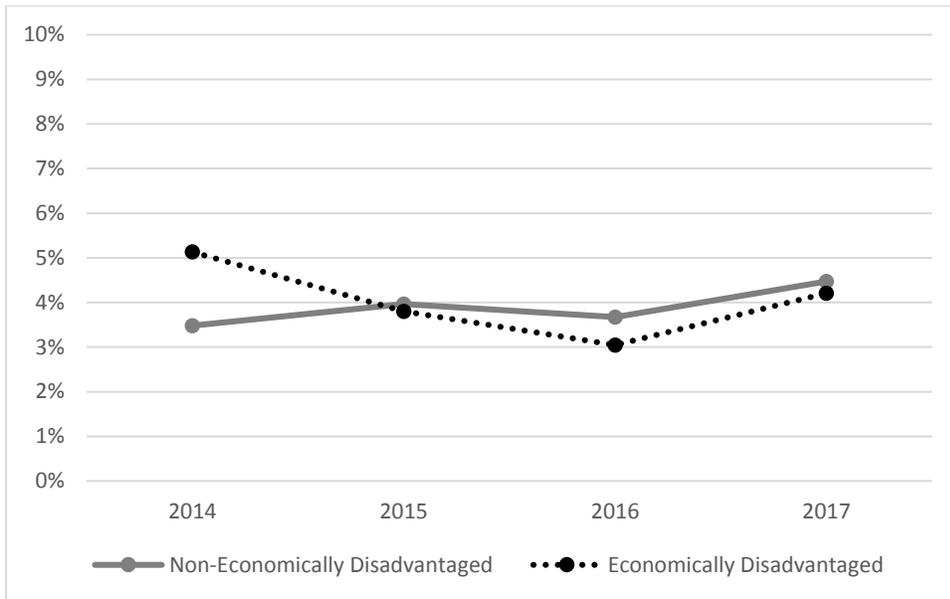
Figures 15 – 17 show the rates of participation in non-certificated, work-based learning opportunities by economic status (as measured by eligibility for free or reduced price lunch). All three of these figures show few differences in rates of participation by economic status.

Figure 15: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Co-ops by Economic Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



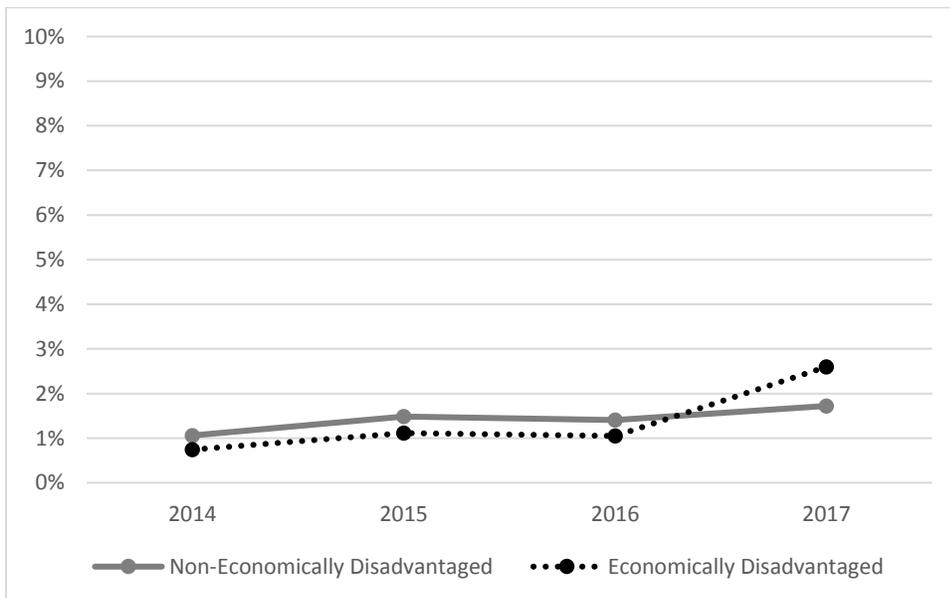
Source: CTEERS

Figure 16: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Supervised Occupational Experiences by Economic Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

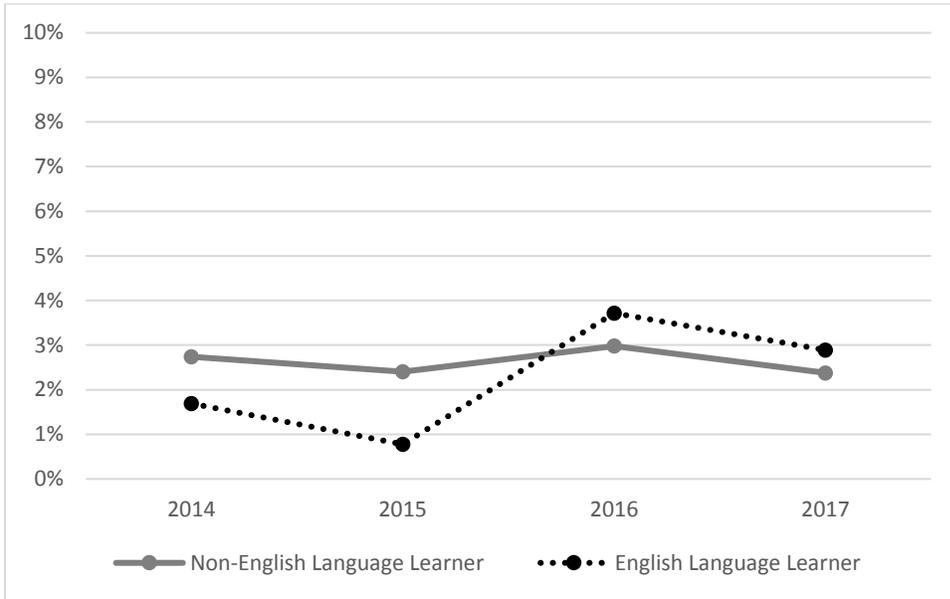
Figure 17: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Internships by Economic Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

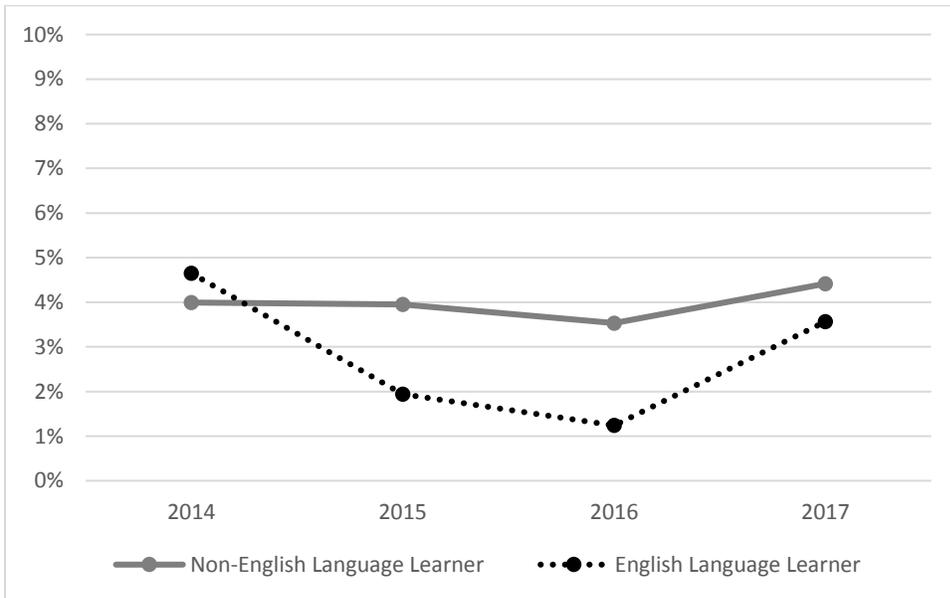
Differences in the participation rate in these work-based learning opportunities between ELL and non-ELL students are in Figures 18 – 20. These figures show little differences in participation rates in co-ops and internships by ELL status. For supervised occupational experiences, ELL students participated at slightly lower rates in more recent years.

Figure 18: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Co-ops by ELL Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



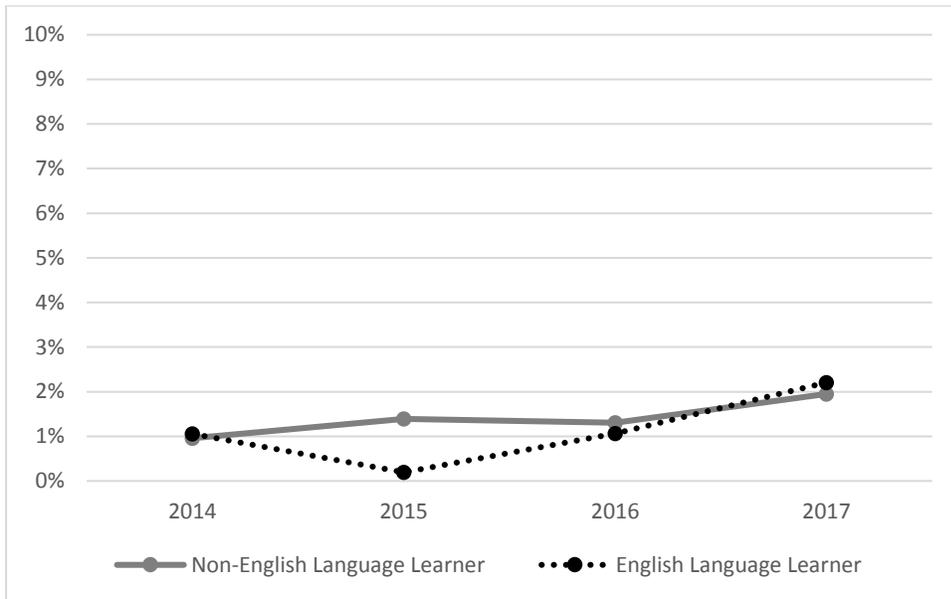
Source: CTEERS

Figure 19: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Supervised Occupational Experiences by ELL Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

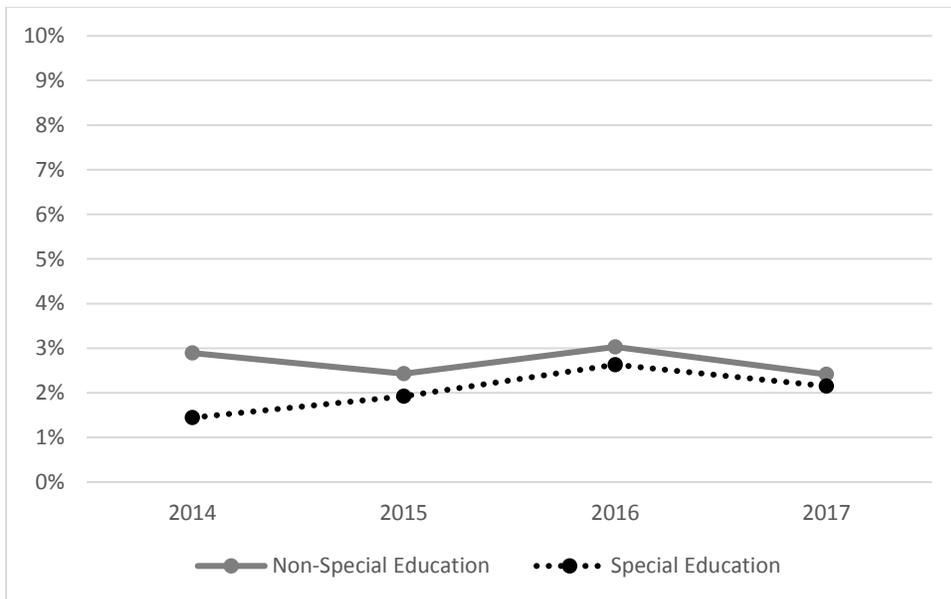
Figure 20: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Internships by ELL Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

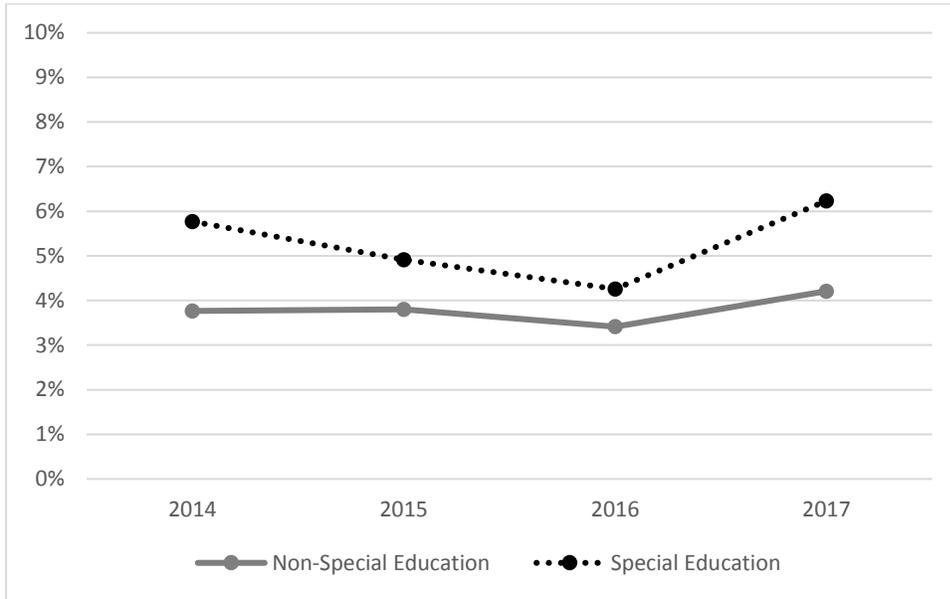
Figures 21 – 23 show similar information with attention on the difference in participation by special education status. Figures 21 and 23 show similar rates of participation for special education and non-special education students in co-ops and internships. Figure 22 shows a slightly higher rate of participation in supervised occupational experiences for special education students than non-special education students.

Figure 21: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Co-ops by Special Education Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



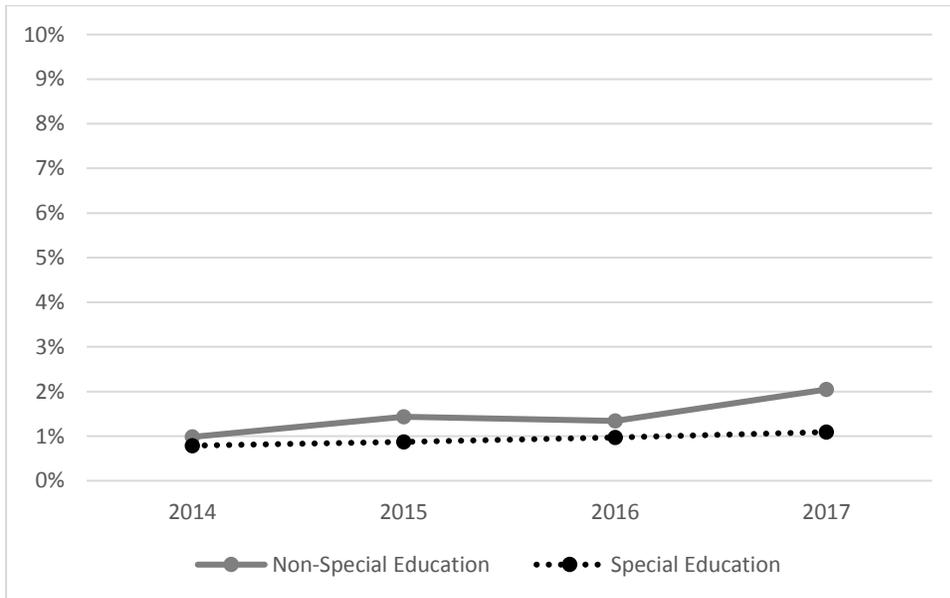
Source: CTEERS

Figure 22: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Supervised Occupational Experiences by Special Education Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

Figure 23: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Internships by Special Education Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

Another way to examine the participation in work-based learning opportunities is by region. Tables 3 – 5 show the percentage of CTE concentrators participating in co-ops, supervised occupational experiences, and internships respectively by CESA for the four years leading up to ACP implementation. As these tables demonstrate, there was variance in the level of participation across the CESA regions. Participation in co-ops was highest in CESA 1 and CESA 9 and lowest in CESA 3, CESA 11, and CESA 12;

participation in supervised occupational experiences was highest in CESA 5 and lowest in CESA 8; and participation in internships was highest in CESA 5 and lowest in CESA 12.

*Table 3: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Co-ops by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17*

<b>CESA</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
1	3.1%	2.8%	4.4%	3.4%
2	3.7%	2.5%	3.8%	1.5%
3	0.8%	1.3%	1.1%	0.3%
4	3.8%	2.9%	2.9%	3.2%
5	2.9%	2.8%	1.2%	1.0%
6	3.0%	2.0%	1.8%	2.5%
7	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	1.0%
8	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	1.7%
9	3.2%	2.8%	1.6%	3.7%
10	1.0%	2.9%	1.2%	1.6%
11	0.5%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
12	1.7%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: CTEERS

*Table 4: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Supervised Occupational Experiences by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17*

<b>CESA</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
1	4.2%	1.2%	1.3%	2.8%
2	2.7%	3.5%	2.0%	1.7%
3	3.0%	7.4%	2.1%	9.4%
4	3.5%	4.7%	5.3%	4.5%
5	11.7%	12.6%	12.5%	16.0%
6	3.3%	5.2%	5.5%	5.8%
7	1.9%	2.9%	5.3%	4.9%
8	1.4%	0.4%	2.2%	0.7%
9	4.5%	6.9%	4.4%	5.2%
10	5.3%	11.0%	7.0%	7.4%
11	3.3%	0.9%	1.9%	2.6%
12	5.0%	1.6%	0.8%	2.3%

Source: CTEERS

*Table 5: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Internships by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17*

<b>CESA</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
1	0.8%	1.2%	1.0%	2.1%
2	0.7%	0.6%	1.1%	2.5%
3	3.1%	0.1%	2.3%	1.0%
4	3.5%	5.0%	3.0%	2.8%
5	2.7%	4.3%	4.2%	6.8%
6	0.3%	1.7%	1.8%	1.6%
7	0.4%	0.7%	1.4%	0.4%

8	2.1%	1.8%	0.3%	0.0%
9	2.4%	2.1%	0.0%	0.5%
10	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	1.8%
11	0.1%	0.9%	0.1%	0.4%
12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: CTEERS

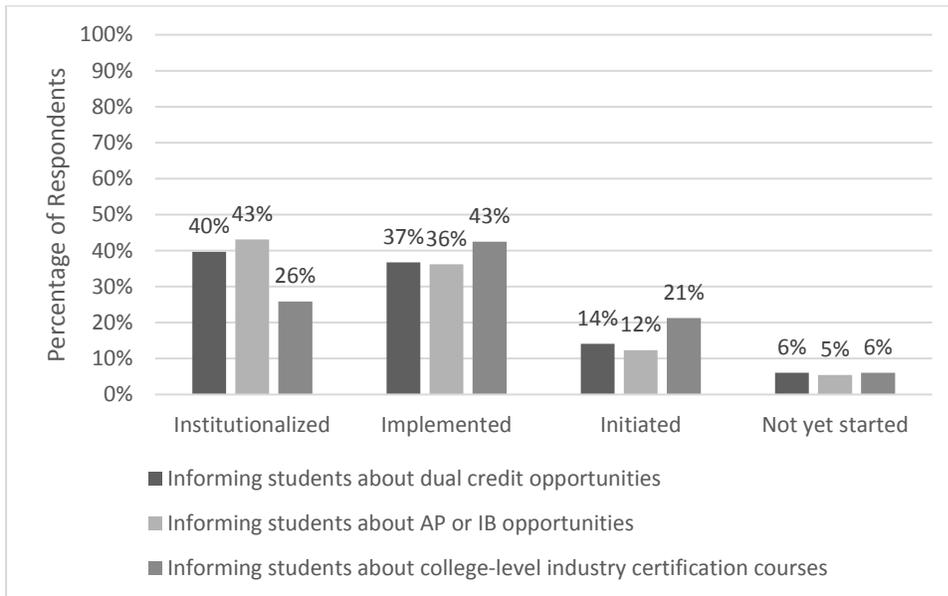
*Students taking dual credit, AP, IB and college level industry certification courses.*

Counselors and teachers across all the case study districts reported that dual credit opportunities were being promoted at their schools. Teachers at Garfield reported that they have seen an increase in dual enrollment participation, with some courses offered online. Even in low-implementation schools, dual-credit options with the area technical colleges were in place and enrollment was growing. Bloomdale High School also mentioned offering Advanced Standings courses that helped students qualify for technical college after graduation. Some students mentioned taking advantage of AP courses, particularly at McKinley High School. At Sunnydale, however, a student mentioned that dual credit options were preferable to AP courses because “you don’t have to pay for them, you get credit, and you don’t have to take an AP test, so the work you do is the grade you’ll get.” Teachers at Niceville reported that dual enrollment, AP course enrollment, and certifications had all increased, noting that in particular, there were now more opportunities through the trades program. The school counselor noted that she now had middle school girls interested in welding.

Many schools displayed potential courses that students can choose under various career pathways on their websites. The course options ranged from regular high school courses to AP, IB, and college dual credit courses.

The school-level survey also asked respondents about their level of implementation regarding this ACP element. Figure 24 shows that over three-quarters of respondents institutionalized or implemented the practices of informing students about dual credit opportunities and AP or IB opportunities. Over two-thirds of respondents indicated that their school institutionalized or implemented the practice of informing students about college-level industry certification courses.

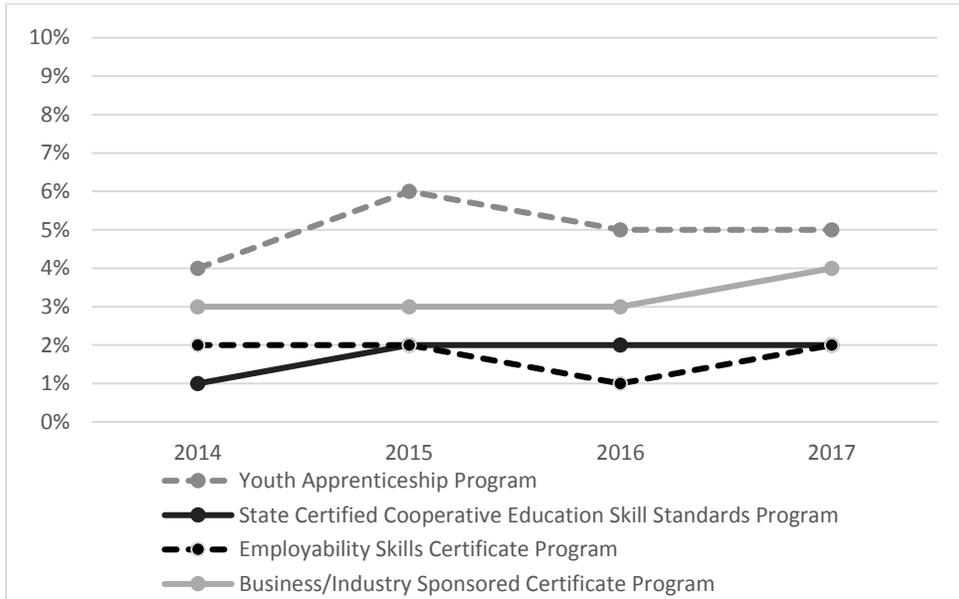
Figure 24: Implementation of Informing Students of Dual Credit, AP, IB, and College-Level Industry Certification Courses



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

As with the previous section, student-level data from CTEERS can also provide information on the participation in *certificated*, work-based learning opportunities in the years leading up to ACP implementation. Again, these data while these data are limited to CTE concentrator students, they can provide a baseline overtime to compare to later years after ACP implementation. Figure 25 shows the participation rate of CTE concentrators for four types of certificated, work-based learning opportunities from 2013-14 through 2016-17. As shown, approximately 1 to 2 percent of CTE concentrators participated in state certified cooperative education skill standards programs, a similar percentage of students participated in employability skills certificate programs, 3 to 4 percent participated in business or industry sponsored certificate programs, and 4 to 6 percent participated in youth apprenticeship programs.

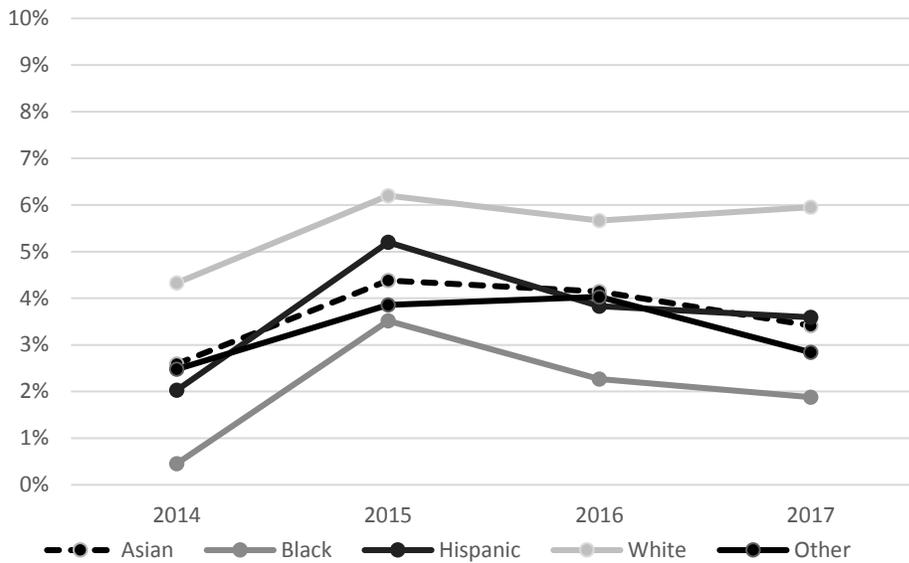
Figure 25: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in a Work-Based, Certificated Learning Methodology, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

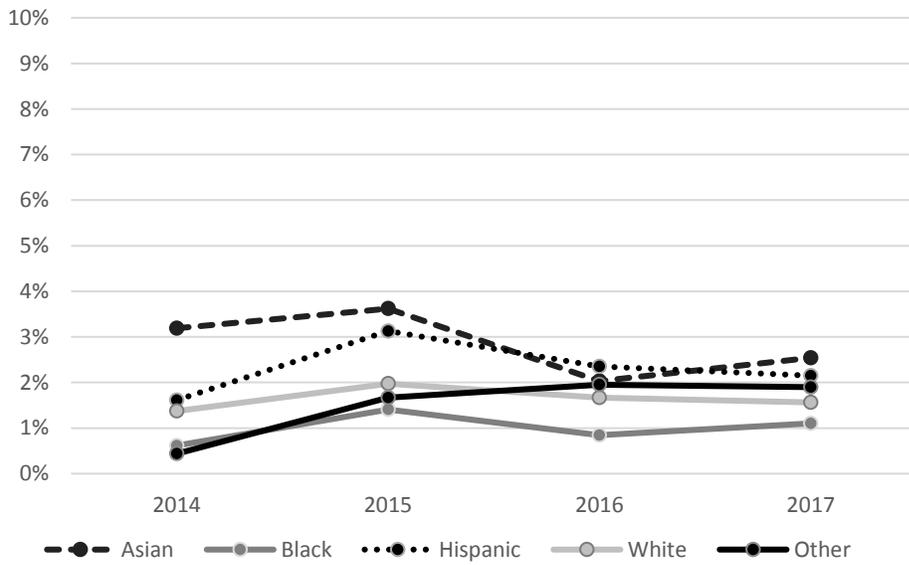
The evaluation also examined the equitability of participation in these types of work-based learning opportunities. Figures 26 – 29 show the participation rates in the four types of programs by the race or ethnicity of the students. The participation rate in youth apprenticeship programs was highest for white students at approximately 4 to 6 percent and was lowest for black students at approximately 1 to 3 percent. Asian and Hispanic students typically had higher rates of participation in state certified cooperative education skill standards programs. In more recent years, there were little differences in participation in employability skills certificate programs by race or ethnicity. Finally, as shown in Figure 29, black students typically participated at lower rates in business/industry sponsored certificate programs than other racial or ethnic groups.

Figure 26: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Youth Apprenticeship Programs by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



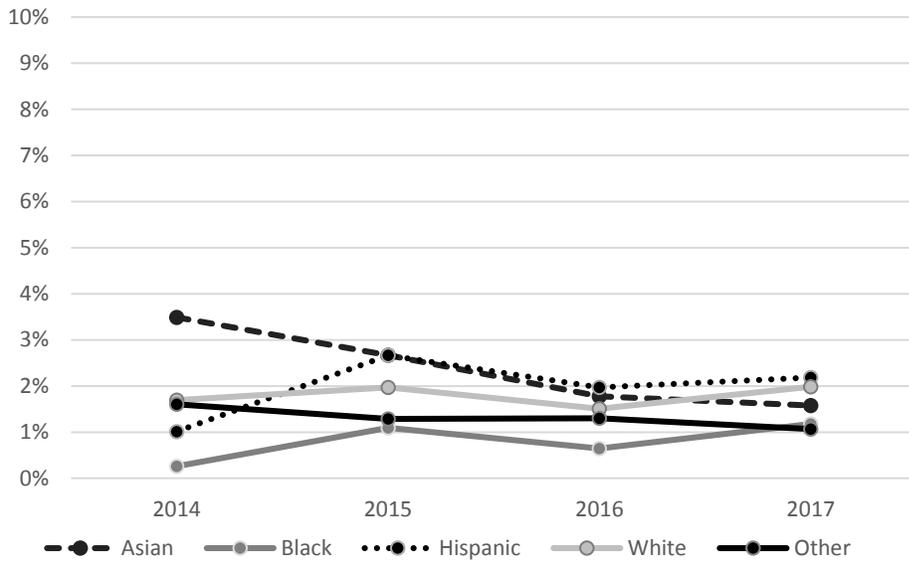
Source: CTEERS

Figure 27: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in State Certified Cooperative Education Skill Standards Programs by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



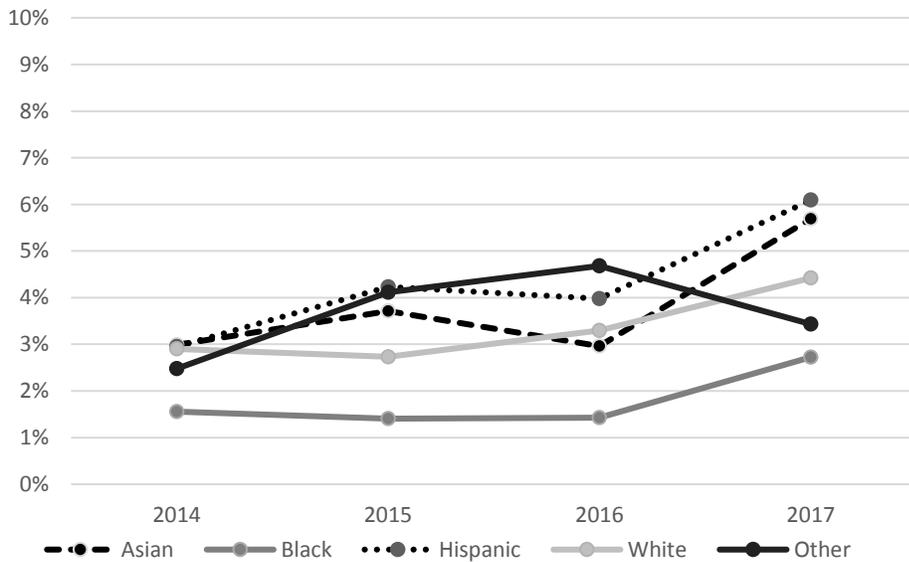
Source: CTEERS

Figure 28: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Employability Skills Certificate Programs by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

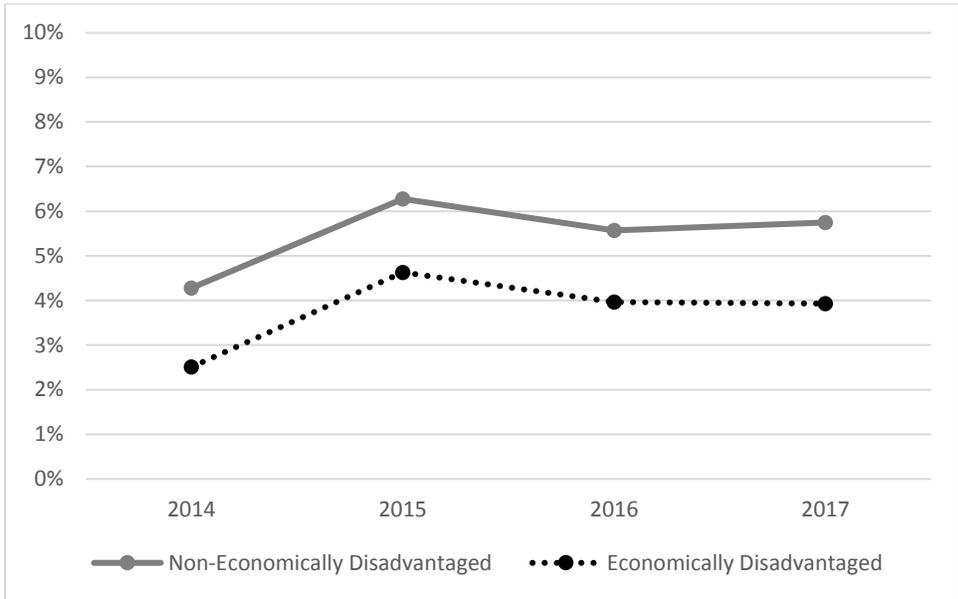
Figure 29: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Business/Industry Sponsored Certificate Programs by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

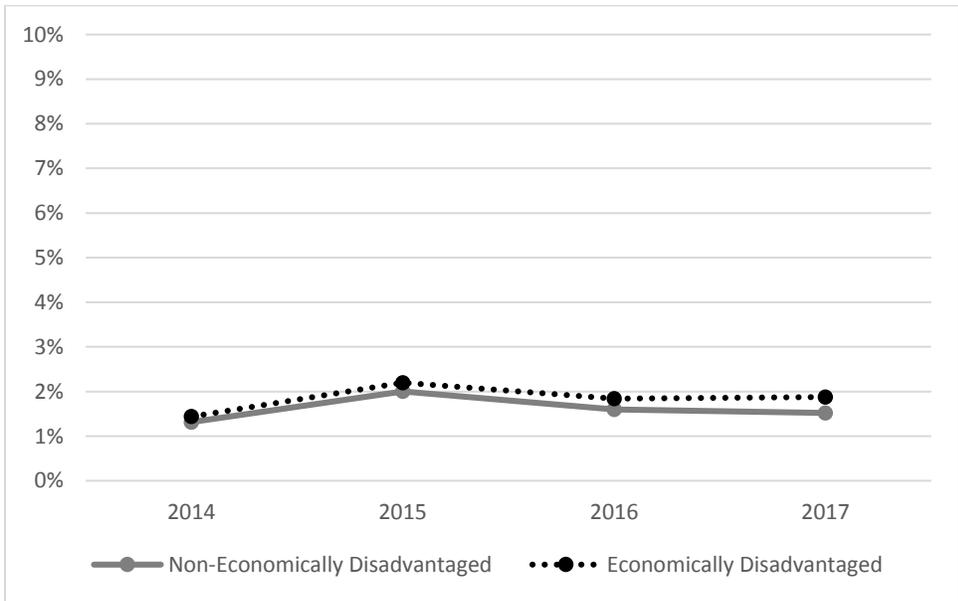
Figures 30 – 33 show the participation rates in certificated, work-based learning programs for economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students. Participation rates in the years leading up to statewide ACP implementation appear similar for these programs with the exception of youth apprenticeships, where non-economically disadvantaged students participated at a rate approximately 1.5 percentage points higher.

Figure 30: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Youth Apprenticeship Programs by Economic Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



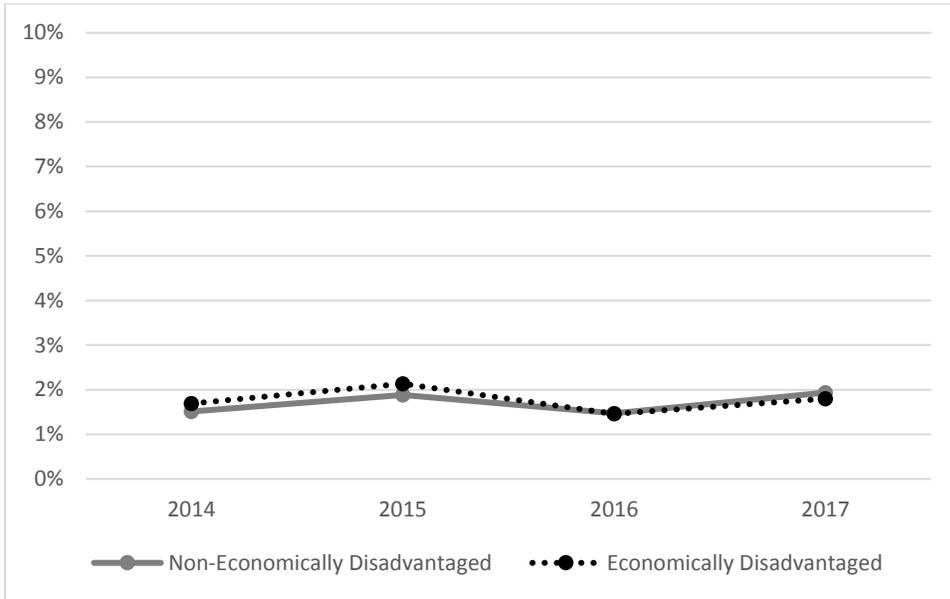
Source: CTEERS

Figure 31: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in State Certified Cooperative Education Skill Standards Programs by Economic Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



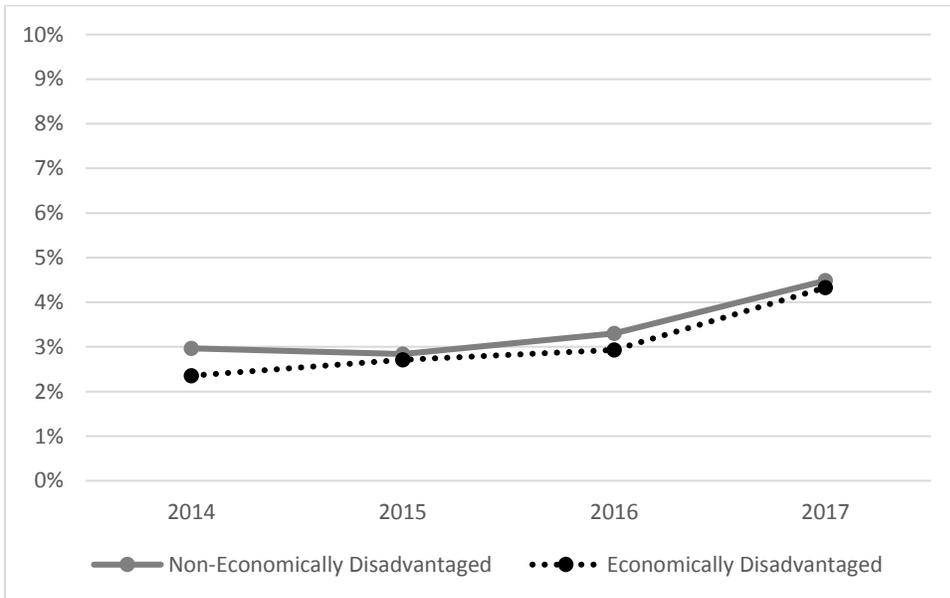
Source: CTEERS

Figure 32: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Employability Skills Certificate Programs by Economic Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

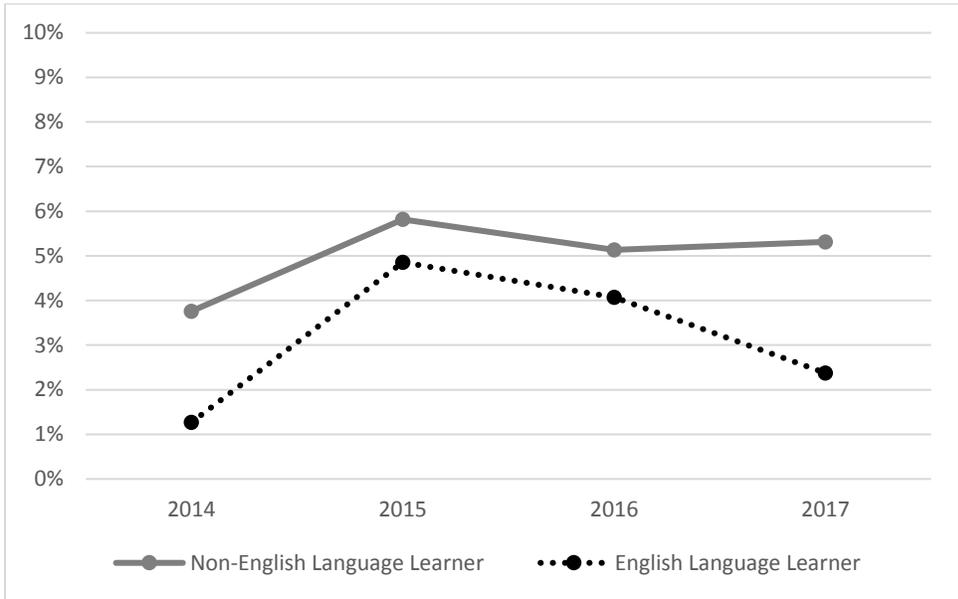
Figure 33: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Business/Industry Sponsored Certificate Programs by Economic Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

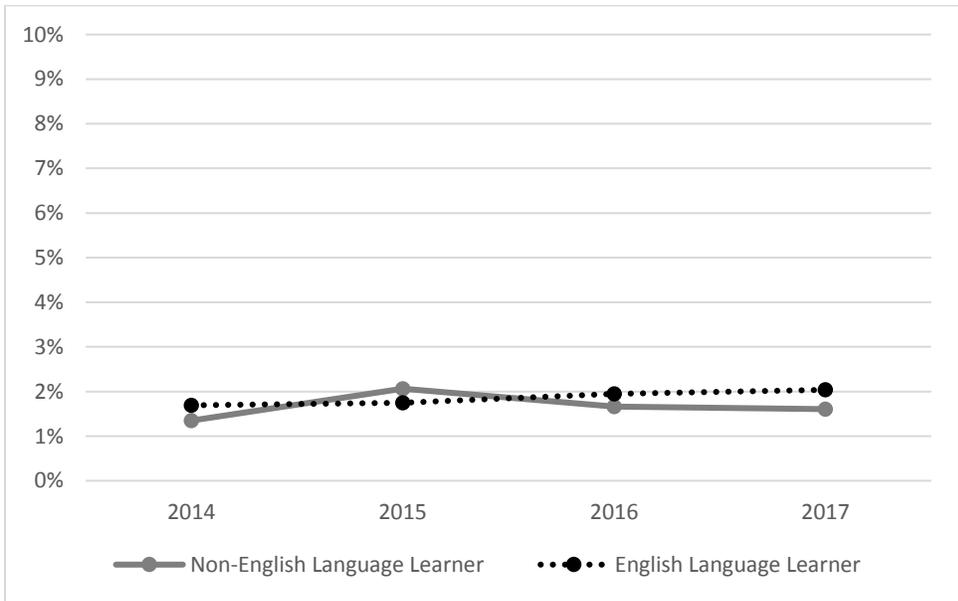
Similar to economic status, there were little differences in participation rates between ELL and non-ELL students with the exception of youth apprenticeships, as seen in Figures 34 – 37. For youth apprenticeship programs, non-ELL students participated at a higher rate (approximately 3 percentage points) than ELL students.

Figure 34: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Youth Apprenticeship Programs by ELL Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



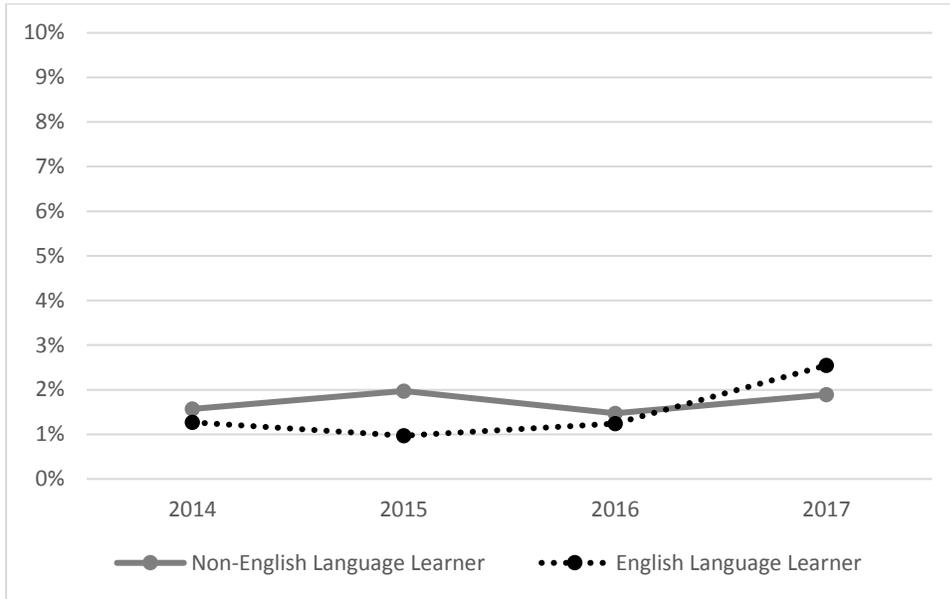
Source: CTEERS

Figure 35: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in State Certified Cooperative Education Skill Standards Programs by ELL Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



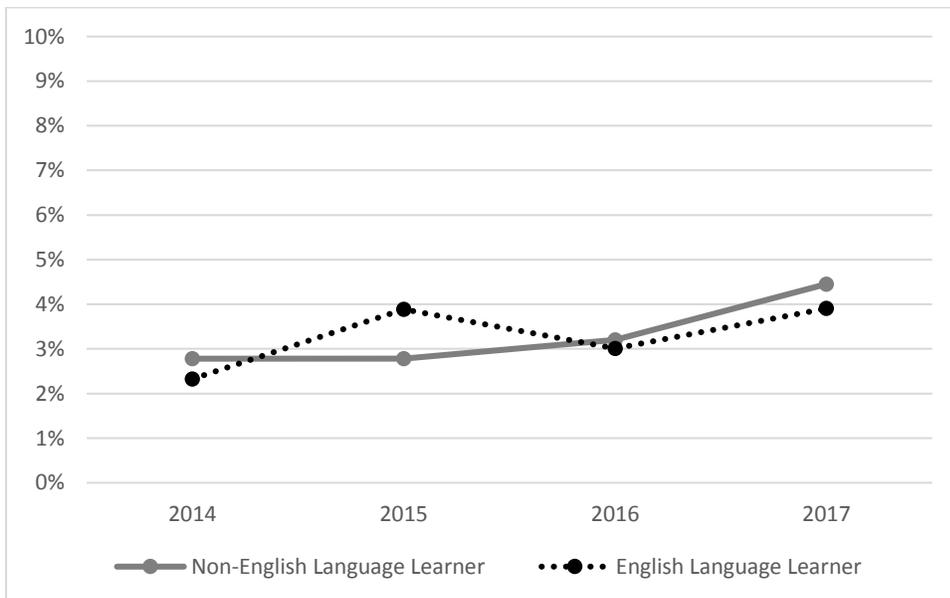
Source: CTEERS

Figure 36: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Employability Skills Certificate Programs by ELL Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

Figure 37: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Business/Industry Sponsored Certificate Programs by ELL Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17

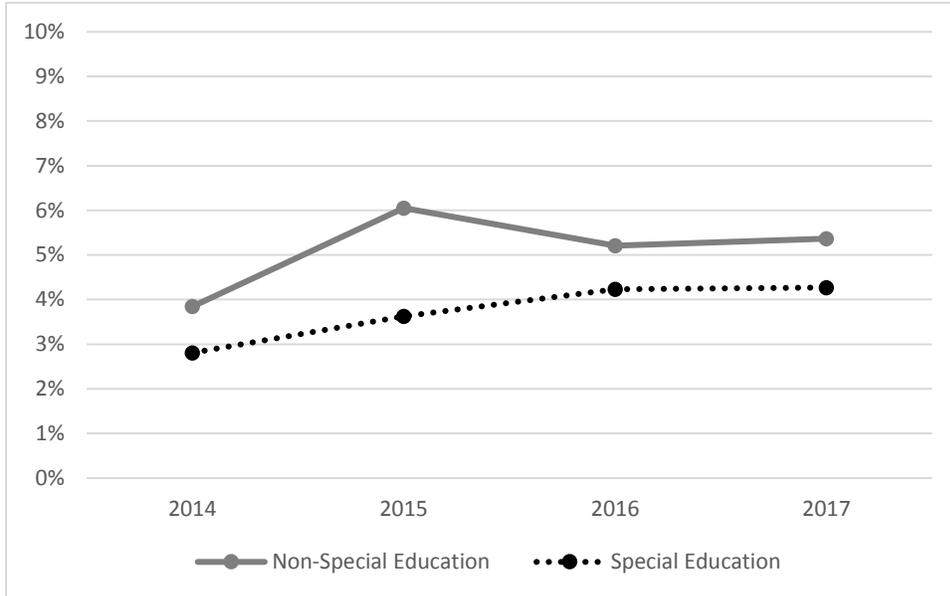


Source: CTEERS

Figures 38 – 41 display the participation rates for special education and non-special education students in the work-based, certificated learning programs. As seen in Figure 38 and 41, special education students participated at lower rates in youth apprenticeship programs and business or industry sponsored certificate programs. As shown in Figure 39 and 40, there were few differences in

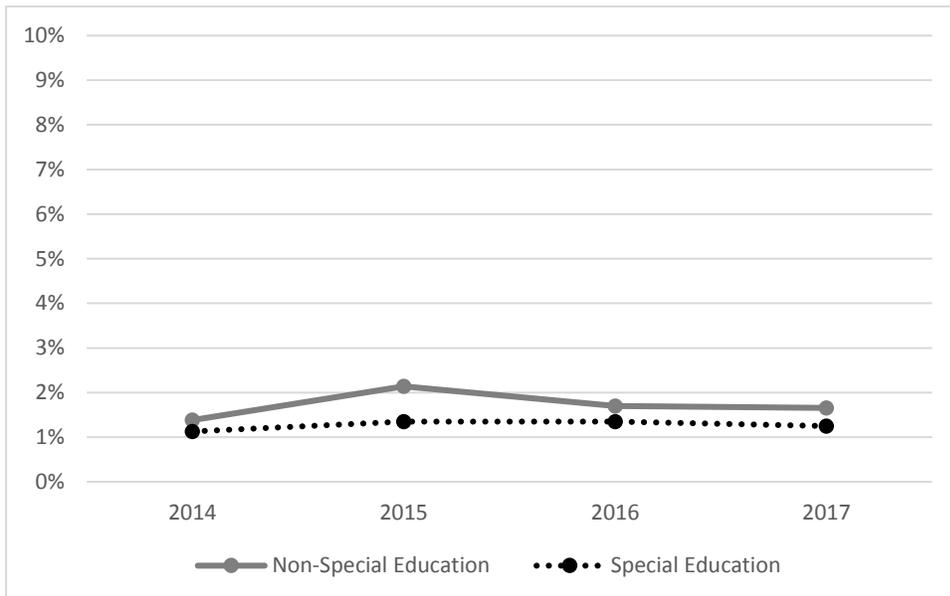
participation rates between special education students and non-special education students for state certified cooperative education skill standards programs and employability skills certificate programs.

*Figure 38: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Youth Apprenticeship Programs by Special Education Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17*



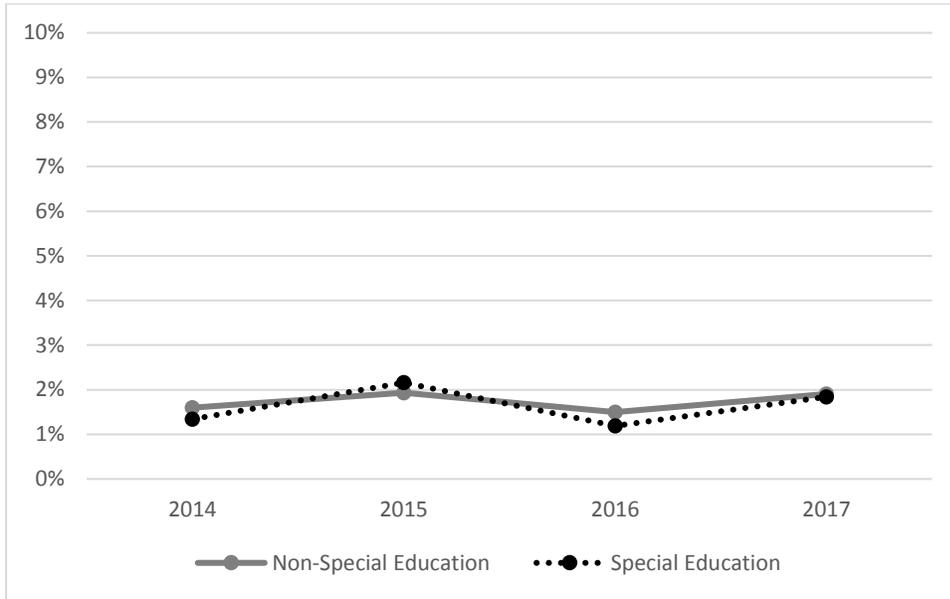
Source: CTEERS

*Figure 39: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in State Certified Cooperative Education Skill Standards Programs by Special Education Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17*



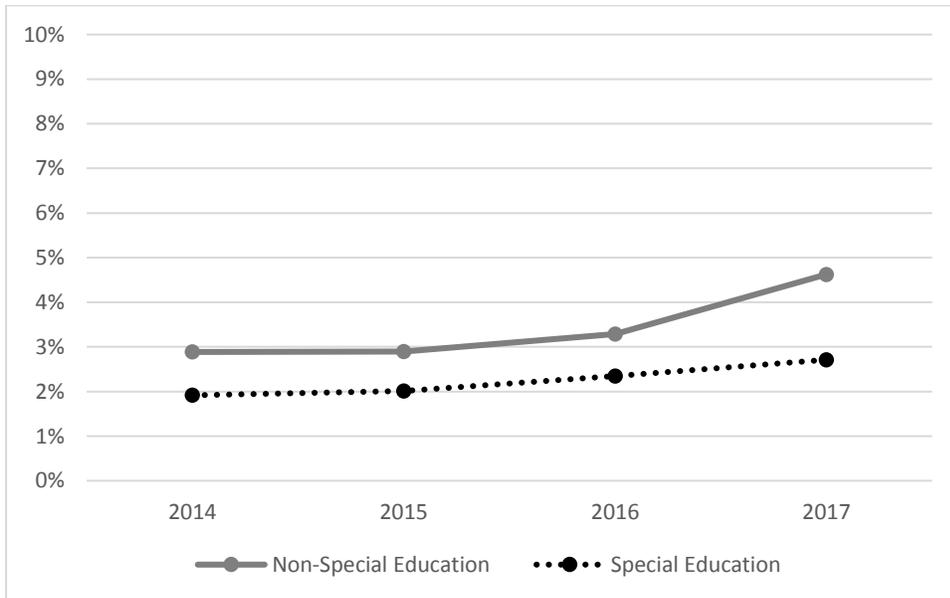
Source: CTEERS

Figure 40: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Employability Skills Certificate Programs by Special Education Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

Figure 41: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Business/Industry Sponsored Certificate Programs by Special Education Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

This evaluation also examined participation in certificated, work-based learning opportunities by CESA region, as shown in Tables 6 – 9. As with non-certificated, work-based learning opportunities presented earlier, there was also a large amount of variation in participation in certificated, work-based learning opportunities across the 12 CESA regions. Participation in youth apprenticeship programs was highest in CESA 5 and CESA 9 and lowest in CESA 12, participation in state certified cooperative education skill

standards programs was highest in CESA 9 and lowest in CESA 8 and CESA 12, participation in employability skills certificate programs was highest in CESA 9 and CESA 11 in more recent years and lowest in CESA 8 and CESA 12, and finally participation in business or industry sponsored certificate programs was highest in CESA 2 and lowest in CESA 3.

*Table 6: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Youth Apprenticeship Programs by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17*

<b>CESA</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
1	1.8%	5.2%	3.3%	2.6%
2	5.9%	6.6%	7.1%	8.0%
3	5.5%	5.1%	8.5%	5.2%
4	2.2%	4.3%	3.8%	4.1%
5	7.2%	9.8%	11.7%	13.6%
6	3.1%	5.6%	5.3%	5.7%
7	4.2%	4.8%	4.9%	5.1%
8	5.4%	2.0%	4.6%	5.6%
9	9.2%	16.8%	9.0%	13.8%
10	1.7%	3.6%	3.2%	5.2%
11	2.1%	4.2%	4.8%	4.2%
12	1.1%	0.5%	1.6%	0.3%

Source: CTEERS

*Table 7: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in State Certified Cooperative Education Skill Standards Programs by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17*

<b>CESA</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
1	0.6%	1.2%	0.7%	0.7%
2	1.3%	1.6%	1.1%	1.8%
3	0.0%	3.6%	0.6%	0.5%
4	1.0%	1.6%	2.8%	1.2%
5	1.5%	3.2%	2.9%	2.5%
6	1.2%	1.7%	1.8%	3.0%
7	3.6%	4.1%	3.4%	2.4%
8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9	3.7%	9.0%	6.8%	7.6%
10	1.1%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%
11	0.9%	1.8%	1.9%	1.8%
12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%

Source: CTEERS

*Table 8: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Employability Skills Certificate Programs by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17*

<b>CESA</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
1	0.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.9%
2	0.9%	1.8%	1.0%	2.1%
3	3.3%	2.0%	2.6%	2.4%

4	0.1%	1.1%	0.5%	0.5%
5	2.3%	3.2%	3.5%	3.5%
6	1.7%	1.0%	0.8%	1.3%
7	1.8%	2.0%	0.9%	1.0%
8	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9	7.8%	4.2%	3.4%	3.7%
10	4.4%	4.1%	3.2%	2.5%
11	2.3%	4.6%	2.9%	3.8%
12	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: CTEERS

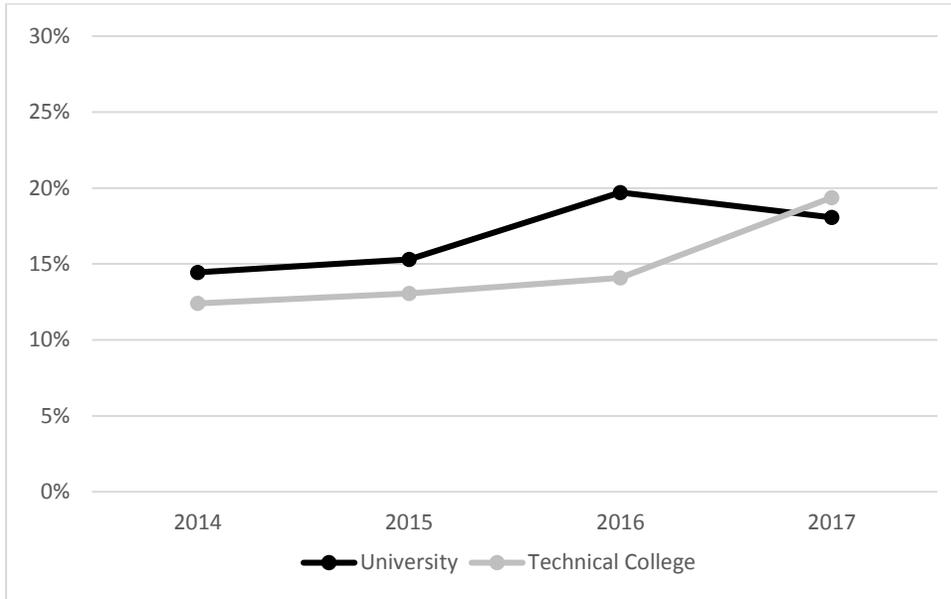
*Table 9: Percentage of CTE Concentrators Participating in Business/Industry Sponsored Certificate Programs by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17*

<b>CESA</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
1	2.4%	2.0%	2.4%	3.9%
2	3.2%	5.0%	7.4%	10.2%
3	0.6%	0.0%	0.8%	0.5%
4	6.0%	3.3%	4.3%	8.1%
5	0.1%	0.5%	2.8%	3.1%
6	4.0%	6.1%	3.9%	3.6%
7	5.6%	1.8%	2.0%	3.0%
8	0.0%	0.2%	3.7%	1.7%
9	0.0%	0.9%	1.2%	1.2%
10	1.2%	1.8%	2.1%	1.9%
11	0.7%	1.3%	0.5%	2.2%
12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%

Source: CTEERS

Student-level data from CTEERS also provided information on participation or enrollment in dual credit courses both for CTE courses at technical colleges and for courses at universities. Unlike the previous CTEERS data which was limited to only CTE concentrator students, these dual credit data were available for all eleventh and twelfth grade students. Figure 42 shows the overall participation rates in both types of dual credit, technical college and university. Participation rates in university dual credit courses rose slightly from approximately 14 percent in 2013-14 to 20 percent in 2015-16 before dropping to 18 percent in 2016-17. Over the same time period, participation rates in technical college dual credit CTE courses rose from 12 percent to 19 percent.

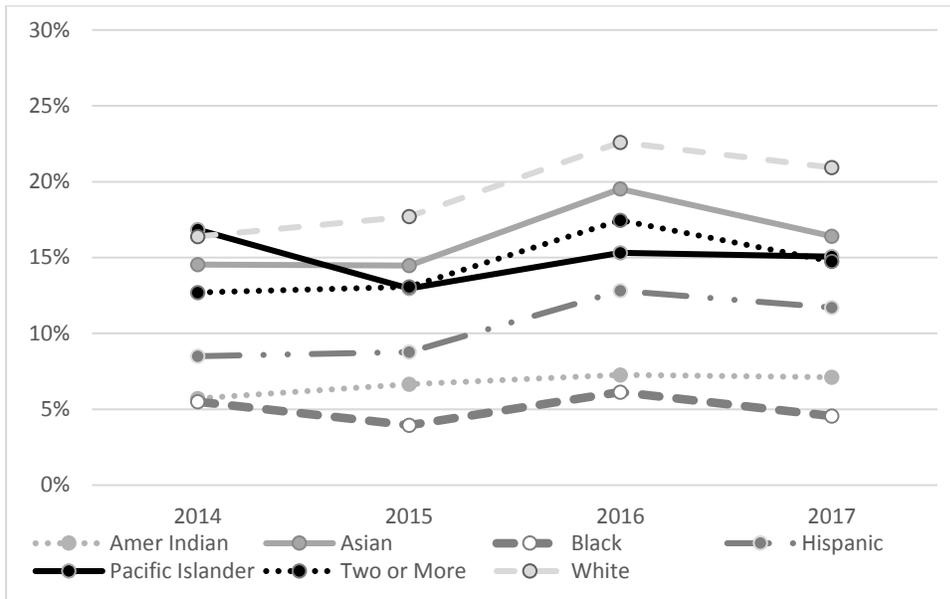
Figure 42: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Participating in Dual Credit Courses, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

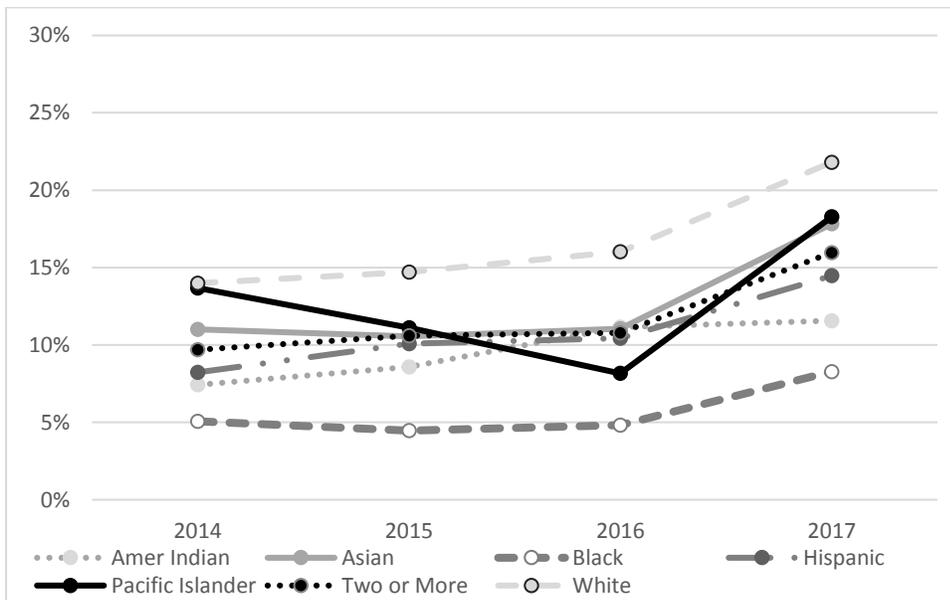
As with previous student-level metrics, this report also includes information on participation in dual credit courses by student subgroup populations in an attempt to ascertain the extent of equity leading up to ACP statewide implementation. Figure 43 and 44 show the participation rates in dual credit courses at universities and technical colleges respectively by race and ethnicity. For both types of dual credit enrollment, white students typically had the highest participation rates and black students had the lowest participation rates.

Figure 43: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Participating in University Dual Credit Courses by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

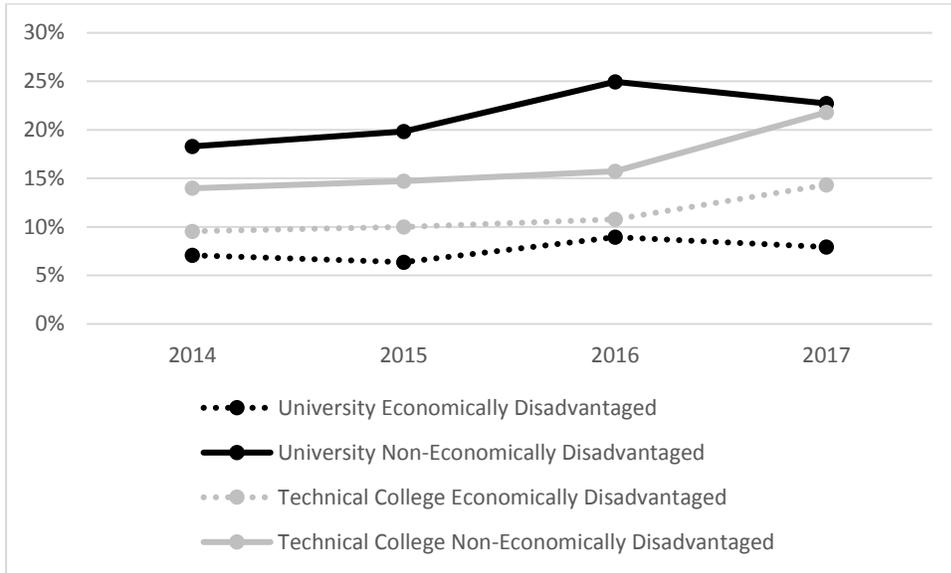
Figure 44: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Participating in Technical College Dual Credit Courses by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

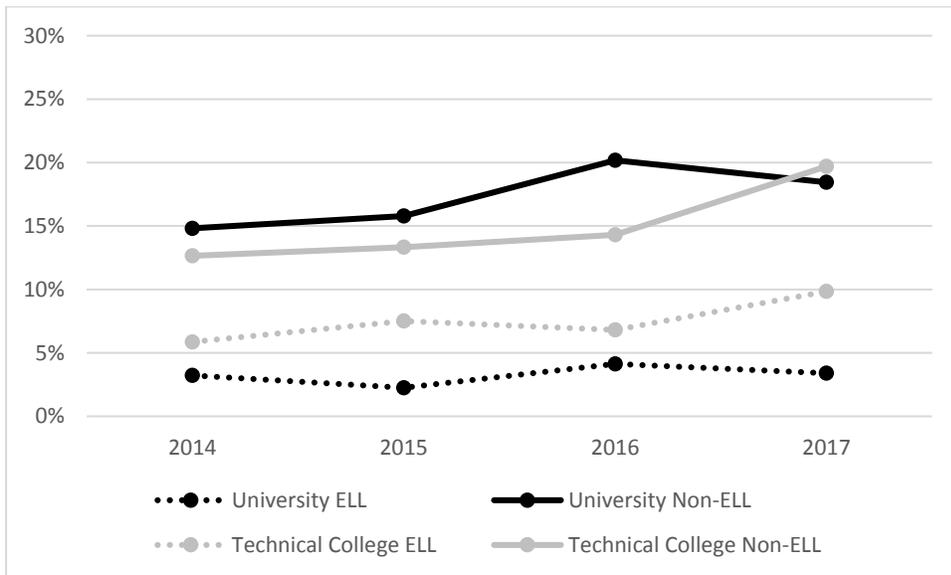
Figures 45 – 47 show the participation rates in both types of dual credit courses by economic status, ELL status, and special education status, respectively. All of these figures show a similar trend with a larger gap between subgroup populations in university dual credit enrollment than the gap between subgroup populations in technical college dual credit enrollment.

Figure 45: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Participating in Dual Credit Courses by Economic Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



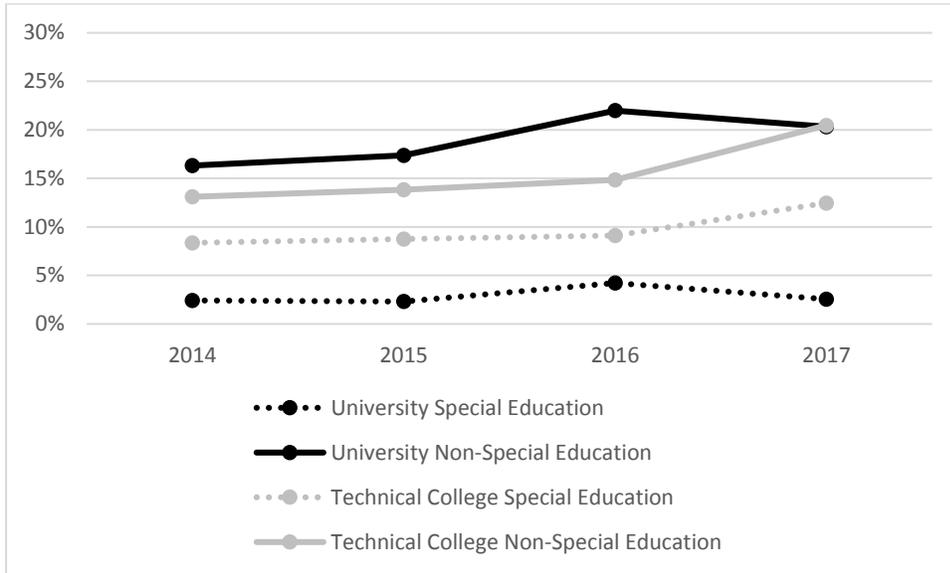
Source: CTEERS

Figure 46: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Participating in Dual Credit Courses by ELL Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

Figure 47: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Participating in Dual Credit Courses by Special Education Status, 2013-14 through 2016-17



Source: CTEERS

Similar to the other regional examinations, there were also differences in dual credit course participation by CESA region. Tables 10 and 11 show the participation rates in dual credit courses by CESA for university courses and technical college CTE courses, respectively. As seen in Table 10, CESA 5 had the highest participation rate in university dual credit courses and CESA 9 and CESA 12 had the lowest participation rates. The region with the highest participation rate in technical college dual credit courses (Table 11) was CESA 10 and the region with the lowest participation rate was CESA 12.

Table 10: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Participating in University Dual Credit Courses by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17

CESA	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2017-18
1	15.3%	20.3%	27.4%	21.1%
2	13.3%	14.8%	15.9%	14.0%
3	7.6%	7.1%	11.0%	12.4%
4	14.8%	8.4%	14.5%	10.2%
5	26.3%	27.9%	29.8%	28.4%
6	23.9%	17.1%	24.2%	23.9%
7	14.7%	16.4%	22.3%	22.6%
8	10.3%	7.9%	6.6%	3.3%
9	1.6%	0.9%	0.9%	1.5%
10	5.0%	4.2%	3.9%	3.1%
11	4.7%	5.0%	6.4%	7.7%
12	2.0%	2.7%	2.1%	1.2%

Source: CTEERS

Table 11: Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Participating in Technical College Dual Credit Courses by CESA, 2013-14 through 2016-17

CESA	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2017-18
1	10.4%	10.8%	11.1%	15.8%
2	10.9%	13.2%	15.6%	21.0%
3	6.3%	7.8%	15.2%	23.8%
4	13.0%	8.7%	7.5%	16.9%
5	16.2%	15.8%	18.8%	23.2%
6	19.1%	18.7%	17.8%	19.8%
7	9.1%	11.9%	12.9%	22.3%
8	10.1%	12.8%	14.8%	19.1%
9	22.3%	21.1%	18.6%	26.5%
10	18.2%	17.4%	23.5%	30.4%
11	7.1%	9.4%	11.7%	12.9%
12	7.9%	6.4%	4.4%	11.0%

Source: CTEERS

*Students utilize knowledge and skills gained through ACP activity participation to set, modify, and update personal, education and career goals.*

In the case study focus groups, students often mentioned goal-setting activities, connected to interest inventories, course selection, and career preparation. Students in focus groups across all sites reported that ACP activities in general helped with planning and goal setting. As one student said, “it helps you figure out what you want to do.” More specifically, students gave examples of plans or changes to plans. For example, one student posited that some students in his school may not have intended to go to college, “but now might consider it because of ACP.” Students also mentioned that ACP activities helped them discover career opportunities they may not have otherwise pursued, broadening their knowledge outside of professions they see every day like teaching or their parents’ occupations. To illustrate, one student reported, “I was originally wanting to be a registered nurse. Then I looked more into it and saw a nurse practitioner. So that’s above a nurse and below a doctor. So I moved up one step.”

In general, the presence of ACP seems to be impacting the extent to which discussions about students’ futures occur during the rest of the school day. Teachers at McKinley High School discussed how the existence of ACP activities changes a school. In addition to structural changes such as homeroom and professional learning for teachers, staff described cultural changes as well. Teachers reported that students “talk about ACP more now” than in the past, including in content courses. One teacher described having conversations about “where you’re going, the direction you’re heading” in during his geometry class. Teachers at Johnson High School also reported “shaping their curriculum” in content courses to include more connections between classroom work and careers. As one teacher described, “ACP made us more aware to include it.” How these discussions may impact students’ goal setting is not clear, but it seems likely that it would positively impact at least some students in their planning and goal-setting. Indeed, teachers at Sunnydale reported that “fewer [students] are going on to school without a declared major.”

In terms of modifying specific goals and plans, this was most often discussed in focus groups from schools that had final presentations or interviews around ACP plans, often as a graduation requirement. At McKinley High School, which requires seniors to do a presentation to a small group of teachers,

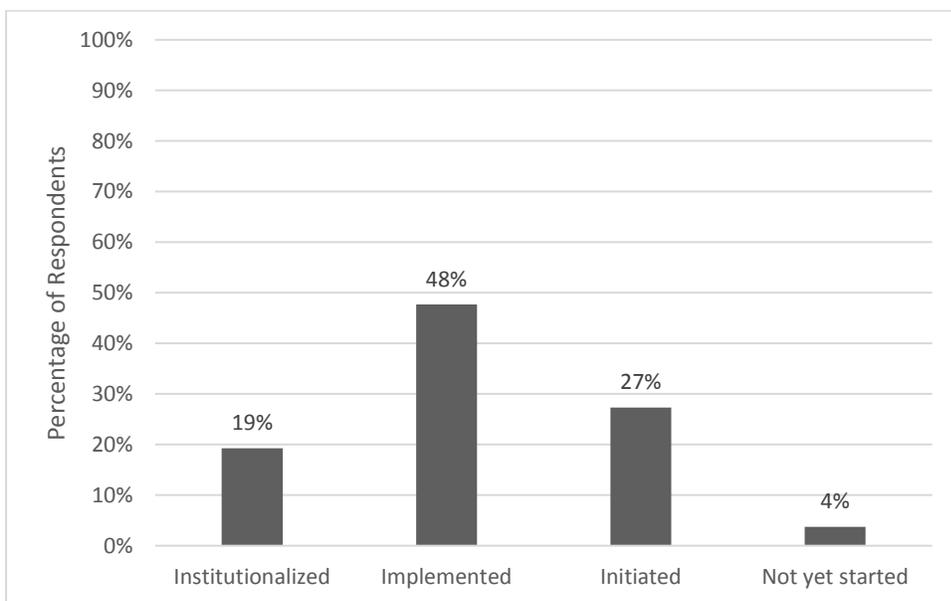
parents, and community members, followed by a question and answer period, students frequently mentioned the changes that occurred in their plans and goals and how they communicated that to the group of adults. They reported that the adults seemed comfortable with the idea of a change in plans. As one student described his presentation,

“I did it on going to [UW-] Madison, but I’m actually going to Stevens Point. It all changed, but I think they appreciated, they didn’t have a problem with me changing, that this process opens new doors for me. The work we did junior year, I don’t think they have an issue with how it changes but they appreciated seeing how it changes your path. They were curious.”

Students across all focus groups discussed changing their minds, plans or goals, and reported that it was acceptable to do so and part of the self-discovery process that they tended to value. As one Sunnydale student reported, “[ACP] helps us figure out who we are sometimes. It might make us think about things we haven’t thought about before, and it might help you think about what you actually want to do with your life.”

Results from the school-level survey related to this ACP element, found in Figure 48, show that approximately two-thirds of respondents thought their school implemented or institutionalized a process of supporting students to utilize knowledge and skills gained through ACP activities for career goals.

*Figure 48: Implementation of Supporting Students to Utilize Knowledge and Skills Gained through ACP Activities for Career Goals*



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

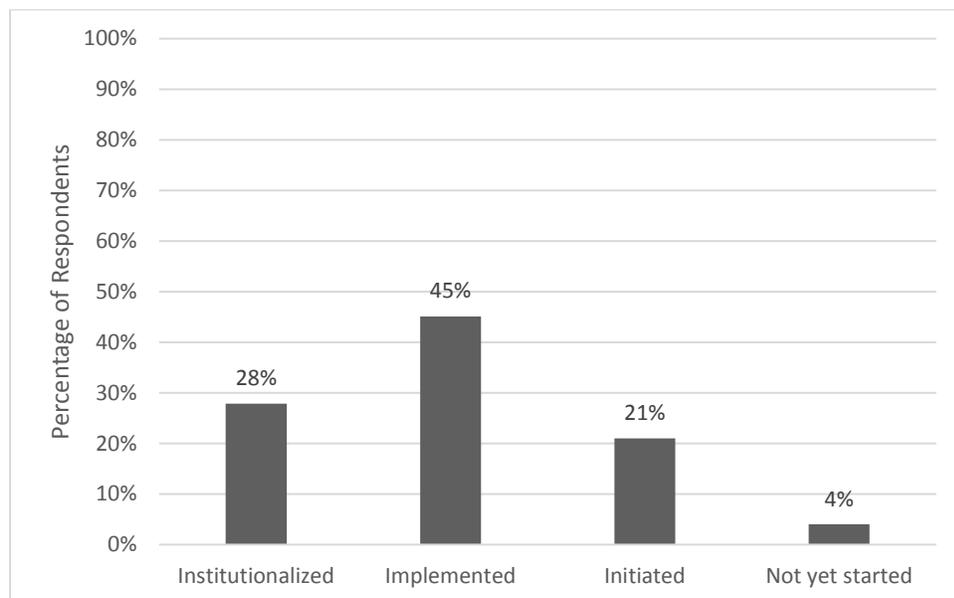
*Students choose CTE and academic courses applicable to their ACP/career goals.*

Teachers at Garfield report that there is now more interest in courses offered through their CTE program, explaining that “students are exposed to a lot more [since ACP began] and they ask more questions. I have a freshman who talks to me about welding all the time. It opened his eyes to the fact that there is a lot of math and reading involved.” Thus, the interest in a technical career seems, at least in this case, to impact students’ enrollment or engagement in academic courses as well.

A number of juniors at Johnson High School mentioned instances of taking courses that related to their career goals. One student reported taking physics because of the goals timeline they were required to create. He reported that he “wasn’t going to do that before.” Another student reported needing to take a course in medical terminology, and yet another reported that “a few classes were influenced by ACP. When I took computer programming, I thought I wanted to do that – it was miserable. Tedious. Not something I want to do every day.” Thus ACP goal setting and course taking decisions appear to have bidirectional influence. Sometimes goals are the reason that students take certain courses; other times, the experiences in courses lead students to alter their plans.

Similar to some of the case study schools, many respondents to the school-level survey also thought the students at their school chose CTE and academic courses applicable to their academic and career goals. Figure 49 shows the results from an item on the survey that asked about this ACP element. As seen in this figure, 73 percent of respondents indicated that they institutionalized or implemented the practice of supporting students to choose CTE and academic courses applicable to their goals.

*Figure 49: Implementation of Supporting Students to Choose CTE and Academic Courses Applicable to ACP/Career Goals*



Source: Academic and Career Planning Evaluation Implementation Year School-Level Survey Results

## Evaluation Question #2: What are the varieties of ACP infrastructure and activities across different school and district contexts?

Under this evaluation question, we present findings connected to the varieties of infrastructure and student activities that we catalogued during the evaluation.

### Infrastructural elements

*An inclusive schoolwide culture with administrative engagement, prioritized goals, staff participation and which is student-focused.*

Our focus groups did not reveal much variation with respect to implementing a schoolwide ACP culture. To the extent focus group participants did mention culture, it typically related to obtaining teacher buy-in. Niceville teachers mentioned that staff “take ownership,” and at McKinley, participants said that

bringing teachers on board helped the culture. Further exploration of the construct of a schoolwide ACP culture should be an area of focus in subsequent evaluations.

*Regular and ongoing informing of and engaging families in their students' ACP.*

While most parents interviewed in case study schools felt adequately informed about ACP, some districts did describe distinct ways of reaching out to them. For example, Sunnydale's counselor holds "Tiger Talks," in which parents of eighth graders discuss their students' plans for high school. The principal/superintendent at Johnson indicated that it would be best to convey ACP information to parents during transition meetings for students between junior and senior year.

Niceville parents reported that they saw "lots of photos [of ACP-related activities] coming through the school Facebook page," which spurred them to ask their children to talk about what they did. Students at Niceville suggested that parental involvement might be leveraged by forming a "parent council." In fact, Niceville has developed a goal and a plan to further engage parents and families, the only case study district to describe having done so.

Websites were commonly used to communicate ACP relevant information to parents. In some districts, each school had their own pages that included ACP information, and in other districts, it was found strictly on the district portion of the site. In larger districts with multiple middle and/or high schools, there may be value in recommending that information be included on the school-specific pages of an overall district website, as family members may be more inclined to search for information on their relevant school site(s). For schools located in rural regions, mail and flyers containing ACP-related information were also used to inform families of ACP. The websearch results indicated that 9 of 286 schools communicated via their website that they were also using email, mail, or phone calls to inform families of ACP.

*Regular and ongoing supportive and safe student relationships with adults.*

Those case study schools that used an advisory or homeroom format that paired a teacher/advisor with students for the duration of the students' schooling generally were able to develop closer relationships with students than those that had rotating responsibility. However, the nature of the activities, the teachers' buy-in, and the culture of the school overall appeared to be stronger predictors, at least in this small sample, of the quality of the advisory relationships that teachers provided. Some case study schools reported building in one-on-one conferencing during ACP time, as opposed to using the time strictly to complete activities. This practice, which addresses the issue of limited time because it takes place during time already allotted, may represent a powerful strategy for increasing strong and safe student relationships with adults. Indeed, in those schools that prioritized relationship-building, students and teachers provided examples of students seeking out teachers outside of class, and even after graduation, to maintain the supportive relationship.

*Non-judgmental, informed, comprehensive education and career advising.*

The school leaders' survey identified a variety of approaches for advising. One district reported that all their students meet with advisors "to review their grades." Another district reported that all their students have advisors and meet with them at least once a month. One high school described yearly student planning conferences, and another mentioned "ACP meetings" with school counselors and students in all grades.

A teacher at Sunnydale mentioned “career spotlights” in which speakers from outside the area are brought in, with the purpose of exposing students to different careers they may not necessarily see in a small town. Sunnydale’s “Tiger Talks” are also a form of non-judgmental advising; as one student said, “we talked about the financial plans for the job you want; some don’t need a four-year college.” McKinley teachers indicated that a model of the end goal of ACP is “in the works” for students who are interested in tech school or the military (as opposed to a four-year college). Promoting job shadowing and opportunities to visit or earn dual credit at technical colleges, which we heard about at multiple schools, can also be evidence of non-judgmental and informed advising.

All school websites have at least some information about school counseling services, but the range of detail on the services they provide, availability, and other specifics vary widely. In addition to in-person career advising and career development activities, online career services such as Career Cruising were also used by some schools. Some schools included a link to Career Cruising on their “career advising” page to encourage students to use the platform to further develop career awareness.

#### *Equitable access to all ACP opportunities.*

There was no reported variation between case study districts when it came to providing access to all students. Every district visited reported including all students in their ACP activities and opportunities. Whether access was truly equitable, or there were other, more subtle means that might make access inequitable is harder to determine. There were some indicators of factors that might (inadvertently) create inequities to access, such as criteria for district approval to fund dual-credit courses, but the current data were not able to address these questions. Further investigation in this area is warranted.

Very few (10 out of 286 schools) provided information on school websites regarding the special services provided to students with disabilities for engaging in ACP activities. One school presented their specific services to engage English Language Learners and students of color in career development. The limited information from the websearch indicated that there is variation in how schools target subgroups of students when they provide special services to promote equitable access to all ACP opportunities.

#### *Regular, ongoing and dedicated time for ACP activities.*

Each case study district had a regular, designated time in their schedule dedicated to ACP activities. Each district utilized a homeroom, advisory period, or flex time to complete ACP activities plus had additional ACP-related activities occurring in core content courses. In some schools, the advisory/homeroom periods are single grade, and in others they are mixed grades. Those using the mixed grade approach reported seeing older students helping and mentoring younger students. Those using single-grade approaches mentioned the benefits of targeting lessons more closely to developmental and age-related needs.

In terms of the amount of time spent in ACP-dedicated periods, the case study districts each had at least weekly periods. In the low implementation districts, ACP time was held less often – monthly in Bloomdale and once every other week in Morningside during the beginning of the year, and less often as the year continued. As mentioned previously, WEC recommends a study of dosage of ACP time to determine best practices.

Survey respondents also reported a number of ways that schools scheduled regular time for ACP activities. One middle school described an eighth-grade Academic and Career Planning class that is offered every trimester of the school year, with two different “clusters” of students following the

curriculum each trimester. In another district, the sixth-grade curriculum is delivered in a class that focuses on ACP 45 times per school year, while seventh- and eighth-grade students receive the curriculum during their homeroom periods. Another middle school described their progression of required courses which culminates in the required eighth-grade Careers class. This course includes a wide range of activities, including a job shadow component, telephone and email etiquette, and money management.

Additionally, a number of schools in the survey reported *altering* the school schedule to embed ACP time, including creating a monthly ACP homeroom, a quarter-long Career and College Ready class, a 40-minute, once-per-week ACP class, daily homeroom periods featuring ACP, or regular Advisory Periods. An elementary school described creating a once-a-week, 42-minute class period alternating between Careers and Character Education. Another district described dedicating 60 minutes a month for grades 6-8 and 60 minutes a week for high school grades.

With respect to activities, in the case study districts, the dedicated ACP time was led by teachers and was often used for Career Cruising-related activities. Students and parents in several of the case study schools reported that the level of implementation and support in the individual ACP homerooms varied depending on the teacher's knowledge and buy-in and sometimes also the time of the year. In Garfield it was reported that toward the end of the year ACP activities may get delayed or skipped because of other academic activities. One student from Sunnydale stated that "our teacher doesn't do everything in advisory" that he or she was required to cover. Another student stated "my advisory teacher doesn't even do ACP." At that school, parents seemed to be aware of the variation in level of implementation, and one parent commented that "it depends on the advisor." When teachers were asked about this variation, they noted that some colleagues may need additional professional development, especially for those not involved with the ACP Team. In Johnson, teachers reported that not all teachers attend the ACP meetings, and that the resulting "communication gap" may impact implementation.

The ACP activities that were built in to core content classes included things such as resume writing in freshman English and resume revision in junior English, a career research paper in eighth grade English, and guest speakers visiting content specific classes (for example, Biology or Chemistry) to discuss their professions. In addition, several districts had additional ACP-focused courses, such as "Insuring My Employability" and "Careers 7" at Sunnydale, a required Financial Literacy course at McKinley High School, and a Real World Writing course and professional agriculture and business courses at Garfield High School.

*Outlined ACP activity curriculum that is scaffolded and developmentally appropriate (scope and sequence).*

All of the case study districts developed a scope and sequence to guide their ACP implementation. The curriculum was typically created within the district based on what was already happening in the classroom related to ACP, examples from other schools and states, and compiled research from conferences. Typically student activities were based around student interests in middle school, career exploration and self-assessment in Freshman year, career activities (like career fairs and business tours) in Sophomore year, developing a career plan in Junior year, and finalizing portfolios in Senior year. Both survey and case study data indicated that at some schools, ACP work culminates in a senior portfolio presentation or other capstone activity. For example, starting in the spring of 2018, seniors at McKinley began presenting their ACP to a community panel in a 15-20 minute presentation, including a post-secondary financial plan developed in their required Financial Literacy class.

The scope and sequence was made apparent to students to varying extents. Sunnydale was the only district that converted its scope and sequence into grade level checklists that were shared with students. Students used the checklist to keep track of completed activities and see how activities built in to the following years' activities. Sunnydale's was also the only district whose scope and sequence included students developing a social media and wellness plan in addition to the more common portfolio-related activities like developing a financial plan, gathering transcripts and letters of recommendation, creating a resume, and logging volunteer hours. At Johnson Middle and High School, students receive a quarter credit each year for completing the scope and sequence activities during their ACP time.

Some ACP coordinators discussed the evolving nature of their scope and sequence. The coordinator from Niceville stated that its scope and sequence is a "work in progress," further explaining that they reviewed it every year and made revisions. For example, students now develop resumes earlier in their high school career than when Niceville initially implemented its scope and sequence.

As noted previously, about a third of schools (90 of 286) in the websearch sample posted detailed activity plans or scopes of sequence for students by grade level, and activity plans differed among schools. Some schools communicated graduation requirements related to ACP, such as mock interviews or presentations of the ACP portfolio, while others did not communicate these kinds of requirements. Despite the variation, almost all activity plans found incorporated college searches and application processes with other ACP activities (job shadows, resume checks, etc.)

#### *Programs of Study identified by district.*

ACP coordinators in the case study districts were asked about the Programs of Study being implemented in their districts. Some made references to specific programs that have been developed, like pharmacy technician in Garfield, and others, like Niceville and McKinley, commented that they are working to develop partnerships with nearby technical colleges that can help support the Programs of Study, like firefighter and EMT cadet programs. And yet others, such as Sunnydale, stated that they work Programs of Study in through CTE classes. All coordinators reported that the Programs of Study that they developed or are developing are a result of student interest and need and continue to expand.

At Garfield, the ACP coordinator reported that their Perkins Programs of Study are not all necessarily offered in the building, but that some are offered online. In addition, all students at Garfield are required to research a pathway, study it, and report on it, which is added to a collection on the school website, contributing to awareness of career pathways. The ACP coordinator also described being responsive to student needs and interests, saying, "If we don't have a Program of Study for a career, we'll research and create a Program of Study for them."

Websearch data found that 54 of 286 schools demonstrated components of Programs of Study on their websites, but did not refer to them as such. This again suggests that clarity around the terminology and perhaps support in consistent communications about such offerings could be valuable.

#### *Student activity components*

##### *Student participation in work-based learning activities.*

While work-based learning was reported to pose some challenges in terms of making connections and arrangements, case study schools were finding innovative ways to meet the demands of students interested in participating. One student at Johnson Middle & High School described wanting to be a

Registered Nurse and through job shadowing was able to see how both the school nurse and a hospital operated. Another student interested in being a history teacher or professor shadowed these professions, including the history teacher at his high school. Yet another reported that job shadowing was viewed as beneficial for and available to everyone. As an example, he said that “if you’re going to work on a family farm you can go look at other family farms.” In fact, at Johnson, a job shadowing experience was required for all students as part of the credit earned for their ACP work, and all students in the focus group of juniors reported finding job shadowing to be useful.

Work-based learning activities longer than job shadows were commonly reported among case study participants. A student at Johnson planned to do an internship at a radio station. A student at McKinley reported having done an internship with the local fire department, and a parent at McKinley described the co-op program at their local fire department which culminates in certification as a firefighter. She reported that she knew “two of the kids that did it and they actually wanted to hire them on, got them gear and everything.” A parent of a student at Garfield reported that their son was doing ongoing work with a veterinarian after school at home on the family’s dairy farm. A parent at Niceville reported that her husband “is a cop and he has worked with some kids.” Other internships, apprenticeships, and co-ops reported included working as auto technicians at local auto repair shops, welding and manufacturing at various local employers, working in a cheese factory, internships in retail accounting and an accounting firm, working at a law firm, and interning at a fitness center. As with job shadowing, schools and students were creative in finding opportunities, such as creating Teaching Assistantships within the high schools for students interested in teaching careers.

Work-based learning experiences were documented in a variety of ways and offered a variety of advantages. In Niceville, students not only received a grade for their work experience that applied to their high school transcript, but also developed mentoring relationships with their business sponsors and received a written assessment of their strengths and areas for improvement from them.

Schools also communicated in different ways the possibility of doing work-based learning experiences as well as the available options. Schools reported having had web postings and bulletin boards that featured opportunities. McKinley High School built awareness of the concept of work-based learning by having the work-based learning coordinator visit each section of the required financial literacy class and spend a class period talking about the rationale for participating, different types of work-based learning, available opportunities, and how to create new opportunities.

#### *Students taking dual credit, AP, IB and college level industry certification courses.*

Participants in focus groups mentioned a number of dual-credit courses that students were involved in, in addition to more commonly found courses such as Certified Nursing Assistant. Bloomdale High School offered a criminal justice course taught in collaboration with the area technical college. Next year, they will also be offering an Emergency Medical Technician course and a firefighting course for dual credit, showing that even low-implementation schools have certain aspects of ACP in place and are growing their programs. Students also spoke of dual credit opportunities at regional technical colleges, including mechanical engineering, robotics, agriculture, paper mill science, and other fields of study. Garfield has expanded its dual credit offerings by now working with three different technical colleges: all sophomores visit one of the technical colleges, and as a follow-up choose and explore one of the 16 career clusters as an assignment in their ACP course. Students at Sunnydale reported being involved in a

number of dual credit courses including in areas such as respiratory therapy, computer science, and network technician.

Garfield students also have the opportunity to earn a variety of industry-based certifications online, including employability skills, leadership skills, and food preparation. After taking a course, students can take a test certifying them in areas such as stainless steel welding, small engine repair, and veterinary technician.

*Students utilize knowledge and skills gained through ACP activity participation to set, modify, and update personal, education and career goals.*

Among case study schools, there are a number of ways that goal setting and modification can take place. At Garfield, regularly scheduled individual student conferring sessions during the dedicated ACP time focused on goal development and monitoring, as well as course grades and selection. Even the act of compiling a portfolio appears to impact the plans of some students. Sunnysdale requires students to collect a number of post-secondary educational documents in their ACP portfolios, which one student reported as a benefit for him because, as he described, “I don’t think I would be going to college right now without it. If I waited, I wouldn’t be able to come back and find all the documents I needed to apply.”

Less directly, students mentioned that trade fairs and visiting speakers influenced their decisions about plans and goals. As one student reported, “I feel like talking to people who are actually in that job they tell you how to get to their place, what they did, what you need to do.” As mentioned above, Garfield students all visit technical colleges as part of their ACP curriculum, and, according to the district ACP coordinator, by their junior year, students have had exposure to all 16 career clusters.

Perhaps most importantly, final projects such as the presentation of the final ACP portfolio or an interview focusing on a student’s plan appear to be quite valuable for a variety of reasons. In those schools (as reported in case studies and elsewhere) that do have a variation of this practice, students tend to be more enthusiastic about the overall ACP process, and younger students tend to see the overall trajectory more clearly. Moreover, the work related to creating portfolios is not as often seen as “busy work.” Those schools in our sample without such a component were all considering adopting it. Sunnysdale reported that they were considering “some of the interview processes that Mishicot uses” as well as contemplating the use of ACPs as “scholarship criteria.” One teacher imagined the value of having “students actually seeing the employers or the scholarship committee looking at their portfolios.” Her colleague added, “Ask them, if we put your portfolio up in the gym to show everyone, would it be a good reflection of you?” McKinley High School has created a “model video” of a final presentation to help students envision and prepare for that culminating experience. They reported that their current model shows “how a college-bound person is doing it” but described plans for creating model videos for those heading to technical college and the military. Similarly, students in Garfield were required to research three careers and present on them, which they reported was one of the “most enjoyable” activities.

*Students choose CTE and academic courses applicable to their ACP/career goals.*

Course selection appears to be becoming more intentional and strategic in the case study schools we visited. As mentioned above, one-on-one conferences during ACP time at McKinley included discussion of course selection. Sophomores are also required to complete an Education Plan during ACP time that they review and revise over time as needed. Teachers at McKinley have developed a process for course

selection that includes a careful review of options with interests and career plans in mind. Sunnydale’s annual “Tiger Talks” with each individual student, parent and school counselor, which are advisory in nature, help students select courses based on interests and goals as well as discuss financial aspects of post-secondary education and other matters. Students in the focus groups reported that these were “really helpful.” At Johnson, one school counselor reported that they had always been very “intentional” about connecting course selection advice to career goals, but believed it would now be “easier” because “it’s the law.” Her colleague agreed, saying “yeah, but now the kids are thinking about it more. It’s made them more aware of why we’ve pushed them towards certain classes.”

In addition to course selection, the creation of ACP-related courses augments preparation for post-high school life, and these courses often appear to influence future plans, course-taking and otherwise. McKinley now offers a “shop math class” for those students “going into the trades.” Several high schools require students to take a semester-long financial literacy or personal finance course. At McKinley, students reported that this course was “the most useful” and “most enjoyable” ACP activity, and a teacher there described it as “the game changer for them.” Students at other high schools also reported that the personal finance course was valuable. Although not mandatory, Sunnydale offers a course called “Insuring Employability” which students reported was very valuable and “should be required.”

### Evaluation Question #3: What are stakeholder (administrators, school counselors, teachers, students, families) perceptions about ACP infrastructure and activities?

In this section of the findings, we report various stakeholder perceptions and opinions about the value, utility, practicality, and other qualities of the infrastructural elements and student activities.

Infrastructural elements.

*An inclusive schoolwide culture with administrative engagement, prioritized goals, staff participation and which is student-focused.*

Case study stakeholders had varied perceptions of the way in which ACP has permeated the cultures of their districts and schools, but their reactions generally were positive. Parents expressed satisfaction with ACP activities to the extent they were aware of them. At Johnson, parents implied that figuring out one’s career path in high school could help save families time and money in the future. At Niceville, parents indicated that students would be better prepared after graduation, and felt relief that their children were receiving such instruction in school. Stakeholders at Niceville also indicated that they see the interconnectedness of the entire program, and teachers appreciated that ACP was integrated into courses. Similarly, teachers at McKinley discussed how ACP changed their school, reporting that teachers have even started talking about ACP in content courses (rather than just those dedicated to ACP). Students at Garfield reported better understanding the importance of career and college readiness.

Communications around the holistic nature of ACP could still be improved at the middle school level. Eighth graders across districts tended to be more ambivalent, or to not see the “big picture” of ACP, (though younger students at Sunnyvale did say that ACP “help[ed] us see our goals, so we’re not so rushed later”). For example, at Johnson, eighth graders’ first instinct was that ACP was a way to “get out of class.” At Garfield, issues might be more related to teacher practice – for example, interviewees reported that homeroom time intended for ACP was used for other activities. All students (including

older students) in our focus groups seemed to have trouble connecting specific ACP activities to the program overall.

*Regular and ongoing informing of and engaging families in their students' ACP.*

For the most part, parents in the case studies had positive feelings about their engagement in ACP, while acknowledging that they would prefer to have more information about it. They also did not necessarily feel the *need* to be more engaged or have suggestions for increased engagement (“I don’t really know what that might look like.”) Students largely shared this sentiment, as illustrated by one McKinley student:

“I guess it depends on the relationship you have with your parents. Because if you have a good relationship, your parents are going to talk about college and financial aid and what you plan on doing. But if you aren’t very close, your ACP kind of guides you, I guess.”

Parents at Johnson believe that as ACP continues to grow, other parents will find out more about it and become more involved, and parents at Garfield hope to be more involved in the future, as well. At Niceville, parents reported that “it’s fun seeing the kids get excited, getting prepared, seeing the jobs,” and teachers said that parents are more knowledgeable with respect to college applications, transferring, and financial aid as a result of ACP.

However, not all student and family members were in agreement about the importance of family engagement – some felt it was crucial, but others, including some of the parents in focus groups, felt that family engagement was either unimportant or even inappropriate. Those students and family members who held these beliefs tended to report that decisions about the future were best left to the students, and that parents did not want to unduly influence them. Consequently, among some, there seems to be divergence in opinion from the state’s vision, which specifies parental involvement in the ACP process. This issue likely warrants further investigation to better understand various stakeholders’ perceptions about family involvement in ACP, in order to communicate, refine, or otherwise address the issue with consideration of best practices, philosophy, and other aspects.

*Regular and ongoing supportive and safe student relationships with adults.*

The extent to which stakeholders in case study schools perceived that ACP creates strong student-adult connections varied by district and even by type of stakeholder, though there appeared to be widespread acknowledgment that ACP helps to support such relationships. Teachers at McKinley referenced strong advisory relationships in homeroom, though students did not. However, students at McKinley developed insights into “real-world experiences” when talking with adults about their careers, and specifically had positive feelings about the two educators in charge of ACP. Students at Johnson appreciated that adults were accepting of their choices regardless of whether they intend to go to college. At Niceville, the fact that students stay with the same teacher advisor through high school creates closer bonds between students and adults. Additionally, stakeholders at Niceville perceived mentoring relationships as valuable and meaningful; as one teacher said, students “know someone is watching their grades [and] the choices they’ve made.” Finally, the fact that Garfield’s community is tight-knit helps encourage bonds between faculty and students, though that may or may not be related to ACP.

*Non-judgmental, informed, comprehensive education and career advising.*

Across case study districts and schools, stakeholders largely perceived career advising as non-judgmental and comprehensive, with a few exceptions. Multiple student interviewees indicated that

they did not feel pressure to keep the same ACP plan, and felt that they could change it often if they chose to do so. Students at Johnson saw ACP as preparation for life, not just college, and that ACP made a two-year or Associate's degree more acceptable. A Garfield parent expressed happiness that her child was starting to develop career pathways. Niceville students indicated that even if a student already knew what he or she wanted to do after high school, ACP activities still provide "something to learn."

Nonetheless, districts may not always have successfully provided non-judgmental, informed, and comprehensive education and career advising, at least according to stakeholder perceptions. The most prevalent such perception was that ACP was more tailored to students who intend to attend a four-year college. As one Sunnysdale parent said, "There's so much focus on college. I think careers are falling...not everyone is college-bound, or college material. And there are a ton of positions out there that don't require a four-year degree. Industries will definitely be hurting for workers." A few other concerns emerged at Johnson, where staff differed on whether the purpose of ACP is for career planning or more related to guidance and counseling, and students felt that STEM courses were imposed upon them (though this may not be purely a result of ACP).

#### *Equitable access to all ACP opportunities.*

The stakeholders we spoke with, including ACP coordinators, parents, teachers, and students, all believed ACP was inclusive of all students and inclusive of all student college and career paths. As described above, necessary activities were differentiated to better support special education or ELL students.

Students in the case studies reported that ACP helped to guide their decisions based on their interests and skills. One student reported that "everybody has an equal chance to participate in [ACP], it all just depends on the person and their motivation." Students in each of the districts reported that the students who put the most effort into ACP received the most benefit. Parents in one district noted that students who receive the most benefit may be those "who don't have the same opportunities at home as others." They believed that the required activities may help to "break the cycle" of some students not being prepared for after graduation. Teachers in Niceville reinforced this idea and stated that students with a "more stable background" may be exposed to ACP experiences like school visits and career days, but for many students these activities give them "opportunities" they may not have had otherwise. The teachers believed that ACP was really helping the at-risk students. Teachers made a similar comment when discussing dedicated ACP time. They stated that having that time allowed them to have conversations with all of their students, including ones who may otherwise "fly under the radar."

In terms of honoring all possible plans, in some case study schools, students would report that ACP work tended to be geared more towards one type of outcome, such as four-year college, than others, as mentioned above. Specifically, some students at McKinley reported that their ACP seemed to favor those going to a four-year college, citing such required activities as writing a college entrance essay and a financial aid plan. One student commented that

"if you're not going to college, that's just an extra stress put on them. But I could also see how it could open their eyes, maybe I don't want to go into a career, it might interest them to do something else. But I don't really see a point for someone who wants to go into a job right away."

Conversely, in Niceville, a teacher reported that their ACP program had “less of a focus on the four-year degree, and more about what’s the most bang for your buck – tech colleges.” Another Niceville teacher agreed, saying that “traditionally, the four-year degree was the focus, now it’s changed. It has to.” Context likely influences the philosophy around ACP in individual districts and schools, but it does seem clear that at least in some districts, certain types of outcomes receive more attention than others.

*Regular, ongoing and dedicated time for ACP activities.*

The district staff, teachers, and parents we spoke with in the case study districts expressed strong support for the regular, ongoing, and dedicated ACP time, including the homeroom time and the additional courses. Parents expressed that ACP was “absolutely” beneficial to the students. Parents also appreciated that ACP was helping to prepare their students for the “real world.” And specifically, ACP activities were helping students with resumes, cover letters, tracking volunteer work, exposing them to possible careers, taking them on career-based field trips and college visits, offering mock interviews, and hosting career and college fairs.

The teachers in the case study focus groups were particularly supportive of the ACP dedicated time, but as other sections of this report have described, there was a lack of implementation fidelity across this element, so teacher support beyond the focus groups may or may not be as enthusiastic. The teachers from Niceville described the one-on-one relationships that they developed with students as a result of the dedicated ACP time. In Garfield, teachers also stated that ACP time allowed for student-teacher relationships to extend beyond traditional student-teacher relationships. Teachers from Sunnydale and McKinley reported receiving detailed instructions for how to spend the ACP time. A teacher in another district, Johnson, stated that she wished they had more instructional guidance for their ACP time, including binders and instructions divided by quarters. In Niceville, teachers shared that there was “no way [they] could do Career Cruising and the work without that [dedicated] period.”

In general, students were supportive, interested, and aware of the value of dedicated ACP time. Older students, juniors and seniors, tended to understand the value more so than the younger middle school students. One student in McKinley stated that “I don’t think it was until Junior or Senior year that I realized I only have two more years of high school left, and I don’t mean that Freshmen and Sophomores don’t care, it’s just that you live in the moment, you don’t plan for later.” However, when middle school students were asked what advice they would give to younger students about ACP activities, their responses typically indicated that they believed ACP activities were beneficial. One student said, “if you put time into it, you could get the job you want.” Another student said, “I’d tell my sister she needs to get it done if she wants to do what she wants in her career.”

In most case study schools, students reported that ACP could be less worthwhile for students “who already knew what they were doing.” However, schools such as McKinley and Niceville required students to have a plan and a “back-up” or “secondary” plan, and students reported that developing this plan during ACP activity time would address this complaint.

*Outlined ACP activity curriculum that is scaffolded and developmentally appropriate (scope and sequence).*

In case study schools, participants reported that ACP activities were often centered on computer-based activities. Student support for the computer-based ACP activities varied across districts. In some districts students reported enjoying the hands-on activities more than the computer based activities. For example, in Garfield, one student stated that “sometimes we don’t pay attention in class...but if we actually have something going on it’s better to have hands-on, and doing instead of being on a

computer.” In other districts, students reported that the Career Cruising assessments were helpful. One student in Niceville stated that she “realized [she] might not have a certain set of abilities needed for [a particular career], but there were other similar jobs that [she] could do.” She reported, “it opened my eyes to how I might think of one career, but there are other careers I could be perfect for.” And some students reported that although the online activities were helpful, “more one-on-one or face-to-face” activities would make ACP better. In all schools, students reported enjoying the “hands-on” activities, such as mock interviews, job shadowing, college visits, and job fairs. And as described above, teachers, parents, and students discussed the need for consistency in implementation of ACT activities during the dedicated ACP time.

Teachers in McKinley reported that the ACP activities are well organized and “sequential.” In Sunnydale, teachers also discussed how the ACP activities become more focused as the students advance in school. They stated that students start with exploring different career paths and self-assessment, and then as they get older, they focus on one career they may want to pursue in the future. The teachers also reported that the ACP checklists that guide the students’ work are broken down by grade level, and each grade level builds on the work done the previous year. In Garfield, teachers said that the scope and sequence “grows and builds.”

#### *Programs of study identified by district.*

All of the case study ACP coordinators reported that their Programs of Study were in response to student needs and interests and were still in development. Johnson school counselors reported that Perkins Programs of Study were “becoming big” and that they planned to follow up with students to “see if they are in the career where they were planning to go.” Teachers, students, and parents in the case study schools did not directly address Programs of Study during focus group discussions.

#### *Student activity components*

##### *Student participation in work-based learning activities.*

In all the districts visited for case studies, staff, leadership, students, and families expressed enthusiasm for work-based learning, including job shadows, apprenticeships, and internships. Job shadows were most frequently described as the most “valuable” ACP-related activity, particularly by older students. As one Garfield student described, “I did a lot of job shadows that helped me see what I was interested in.” Younger students, particularly the eighth graders we talked to, tended to mention looking forward to these activities. High school juniors in one focus group mentioned some ancillary benefits of job shadowing including organizing their schedules and communicating with adults to coordinate visits. Students saw these benefits as “preparation for life, not just college.” Students did note that travel and time away from school could be problematic, particularly for those without a driver’s license.

Teachers also emphasized the usefulness of job shadowing. At Johnson High School, teachers added that mock interviews were particularly valuable as well. Feedback from their students indicated that these two experiences were the most valuable experiences, but teachers added that job shadowing is hard to set up. Because job shadowing at Johnson High School required students to prepare cover letters and resumes, teachers expressed the view that job shadowing helped students reinforce their thinking on which career path to take.

*Students taking dual credit, AP, IB and college level industry certification courses.*

In the case studies, students in the final years of high school tended to mention the value of dual enrollment courses, as did teachers and parents. Discussion of AP courses tended to vary greatly depending on the location. McKinley High School students tended to mention them frequently, as a matter of course. In the smaller schools they were mentioned less, but did exist, sometimes in collaboration with other districts or via distance learning. No schools mentioned opportunities with IB courses. College level industry certification courses were not generally discussed, other than as a dual-enrollment component.

The principal at Bloomdale High School mentioned the high cost to the district for dual enrollment courses with their technical college to be a particular challenge, noting that they “want their kids to be able to do them, but [they] have to think about what [they] can afford.” This principal mentioned a recent discussion with the school board regarding this issue, reporting “how do we support kids taking advanced coursework, especially if it isn’t in line with their ACP?” She mentioned that “some of the kids who are not very successful in school that want to take one of these courses, it’s a tough decision to pay for them, to give them a shot but not setting them up for success.” In addition to financial constraints, this raises the issue of determining eligibility for these courses – who decides, based on what criteria, and whether it is done equitably. This issue deserves additional attention, particularly in relation to equitable access.

*Students utilize knowledge and skills gained through ACP activity participation to set, modify, and update personal, education and career goals.*

One junior at Johnson High School reported that “ACP opened up my mind about ‘Wow, I have so many options.’” Another reported that “before ACP it was like, I could be a teacher or do what my parents do. ACP showed all the options.” Another reported, “even in the medical field there are so many options.” A parent at Niceville High School reported that his son had seen a presentation at career day by a pilot and “he ran with that” and will be attending aviation school in the fall of 2018. One Niceville student reported,

“If not for Career Cruising and Career Day, I’d be going down a totally different path that I don’t believe I would have enjoyed as much as this. It helped me change my mind and spark the flame to work towards my goals.”

A Niceville junior said,

“It helps bring down a lot of misconceptions about different job fields that you don’t know much about. What you’d need, the schooling, a lot of what I was interested in I thought you needed six to eight years of college, but really you could go down a tech school route.”

Yet another student at Niceville summarized the effects of ACP when he said,

“[ACP] got me to my next step, it’s in my hands, it gave me the reins, it gave me a lot of insight into things. It helped me make decisions.”

Based on interviews with staff and students in high-implementation schools and with school leaders in low-implementation schools, the career interest surveys continue to turn some students off when they are presented with career possibilities that they do not like or feel are a bad match. In all groups of middle school students and in some groups of high school students, participants talked about the

“stupid” careers that were suggested as matches for their interests. In some cases, students identified this as the point where they lost interest or confidence in the process. Teachers mentioned similar hurdles, with one reporting,

“the careers that come up aren’t typically what kids want to do, so there’s that disconnect between their answers and possible career options. And they say, ‘Well, I don’t want to do any of these things,’ so it’s difficult to convince them that they need to explore these careers because it’s something they’re not interested in.”

There may well be value in developing talking points and/or training on how educators can address these student reactions to prevent potential breakdowns of this sort in the ACP process.

#### *Students choose CTE and academic courses applicable to their ACP/career goals.*

Case study teachers reported that ACP activities help students “make connections between school and career.” Students themselves appeared to see the value of ACP for influencing high school course selection. While juniors at Johnson High School, which had just begun implementing ACP, had not been able to take advantage of these benefits all along, they recognized the potential of ACP for helping younger students select their high school courses. In fact, they reported that they would like “more time to think about [course selection]. What is our schedule going to be next year?” One perception repeated across many student focus groups was the difficulty of course selection due to the number of required courses, particularly in the first years of high school.

In less direct ways, course selection may be influenced by speaking with people in careers of interest. As one student described the value of trades fairs, “I also liked hearing what they wished they’d have done more, because I know people that I talked to say they wish they’d done this in high school or that. That puts perspective on me about what I should do.”

Parents, although typically less familiar with the details of ACP in their children’s schools, often named informed course selection as one of the benefits of ACP, specifically describing the possibility of students determining a career path while in high school rather than in college, and thus saving time and money down the road. Indeed, this idea surfaced repeatedly in focus groups across all stakeholders. For example, in Niceville, parents named “sorting out classes and what to take” as one of the main purposes for their students to engage in ACP-related activities. Another parent in this focus group gave the example of her ninth-grade son who “knows what his next couple years of math courses plan is. They’re at school making those choices.”

#### *Additional feedback*

Additional feedback that did not pertain directly to the infrastructural elements and student activities was also shared during focus groups and interviews, and is reported here for DPI’s consideration.

As in years past, teachers and administrators reported that one hurdle of ACP implementation was that there was not enough clear guidance from DPI, that schools wanted clear roadmaps, templates, and other prescriptive means for implementing ACP. Given that DPI was intentional about not being prescriptive, determining it to be preferable to let districts plan their programs based on local needs and context, it may be that DPI needs to continue messaging that philosophy, as it appears that this aspect still creates frustration among educators. Counselors in one school were more critical of DPI’s role, saying that the roll-out was “not a well organized process.” One counselor expressed the wish that DPI

had set out standards and then developed activities based on those objectives, fearing that if ACP was not standards- or research-based, it would fade away as other initiatives have. A school counselor at Johnson High School reported that she would like “to see DPI focus on Wisconsin school counseling standards and encourage everyone to connect ACP work with those standards.” She believed that “at the end of the day those standards are the leaders of this initiative.”

Local level evaluation was discussed by stakeholders in several case study districts. A parent at McKinley suggested that it could be valuable to “reach out to the graduates this year, in the fall, and talk to them about what was good for them, what was helpful, and what they think should be done for the students this coming year, what they missed out on. I think that would be great for [the counselor] to see, some follow-up.” Teachers and administrators talked about the desire to better understand and use outcomes data. As identified in previous years’ evaluations, there appears to be a strong desire in the field for local evaluation tools, a need which is currently being addressed through the concurrent efforts funded through the State Longitudinal Data Systems grant.

To the high-implementation, small, rural schools, we asked what advice they would give small schools struggling to implement ACP. Garfield leadership was very concise, offering three key ideas:

“First, the concept that it takes a community. It doesn’t have to be a whole lot of work for everyone. Share the duties and combine your talents. Find your comfort zone – one area where you can be a resource for something. Second, there are resources out there, you don’t have to reinvent the wheel. Three, if [staff] is balking at it, get some statements from students from other districts about how it’s helping them. If they’re truly focused on the good of the students, they will want to get on board to benefit the kids.”

In several of the small, rural schools, educators talked about having graduates return to talk to current students about their lives after high school, including what they wished they had done differently. These schools provided students an additional resource in the form of a near peer to add credibility to ACP program, a practice that may be valuable for others to become aware of and potentially implement.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

In this section, we detail the key findings of this year’s evaluation, as interpreted by WEC evaluators. The findings are accompanied, where appropriate, by recommendations. The subsequent section, “Next Steps,” reiterates and expands on those recommendations that involve potential future research and evaluation work.

### Key Finding #1: ACP Implementation in Wisconsin is Growing

Based on the various data sources, it appears that ACP is being implemented to some extent in nearly all districts and schools. While the extent to which, and the manner in which, ACP is being implemented varies considerably across districts and schools, it appears that even the lowest implementation schools we examined had some practices in place, and were working to build their ACP programs. The biggest gap in implementation appears to be connected to family engagement. Nearly all respondents to surveys and participants in case studies named this element as the area in which they had made the least progress, and/or that was the most challenging. A few districts have created very intentional family engagement plans, and they may well serve as models for others. The extent to which families should be

involved in their students' planning process and decision-making, however, is subject to debate, with opinions varying widely, particularly among students and family members.

**Recommendation:** DPI should support district/school family engagement efforts with resources that help LEAs plan for and navigate this process with intentionality.

**Recommendation:** Further research into how much family involvement is desirable or "appropriate," in the eyes of various stakeholders and contexts, could be useful in clarifying recommendations around this element.

### Key Finding #2: Recognizing the Entirety of ACP

Older students, particularly seniors, tended to most clearly understand the value and importance of ACP. Sometimes the younger students, especially those in middle school, were less clear about why they were engaging in the activities, or that activities were intended to build over time through their senior year. It appears that students do not often see the totality of a school or district's ACP programming, but instead view it as a series of unrelated activities, at least until late in the progression. As a senior at Niceville said, "ACP is more broad than what most of us think it is. It's not just Career Cruising, right?" His classmate added, "I think we do a lot of ACP but we don't really realize that it's all part of it until we're told. I didn't realize that, like, being on Athletic Awards could be helpful for my future."

**Recommendation:** Schools and districts should (continue to) communicate to students the "big picture" of ACP, making sure to clarify the articulation of activities between grades and the rationale for implementing ACP. Sharing a version of the scope and sequence, clearly communicating the purpose and benefits of ACP, and sharing positive feedback from recent graduates are possible strategies for these communication efforts.

### Key Finding #3: Powerful Practices

Certain practices and activities surfaced repeatedly across the various data collection methods, particularly among student focus groups, that were reported to be particularly useful, impactful, or otherwise positive. They tend to have in common a "hands-on" nature, and a connection to the "real world."

- **Job shadowing** was spoken of enthusiastically in all case study sites, by students, teachers and family members. Students described important information that influenced their thinking about career directions resulting from job shadows lasting even just a few hours. These activities appear to provide strong returns for a relatively small investment of time. Being creative about how and where these opportunities might happen is one recommended strategy for increasing the number of opportunities for student job shadows.
- **Mock interviews** were also mentioned repeatedly as a valuable activity. Given that almost all students, regardless of their post-high school plans, will be faced with the interviewing process, preparing students for interviews would be universally valuable.
- **Resume building** was another activity that was found to be particularly valuable, and, like mock interviews, universally useful.
- **One-on-one conferences** are means to build strong, supportive student-adult relationships and further individualize the ACP process. Research has already concluded that the relationship

factor is one of the most important elements in successful ACP implementation. With individual attention and mentoring, the ACP becomes less a collection of generic exercises, and more of a thoughtful, personalized plan. If such conferences are conducted during the already allotted regular “ACP time,” schools could avoid challenges brought on by scheduling additional time.

- **Final projects** such as the presentation of the final ACP portfolio or an interview focusing on a student’s plan were found to be valuable for a number of reasons. While there are many varieties of final projects (what is presented, the format, the audience, feedback format, whether it is a graduation requirement, etc.), stakeholders across the board tended to be most enthusiastic about this powerful practice.

**Recommendation:** DPI may wish to promote the Powerful Practices and perhaps share a variety of examples of them from around the state. Accompanying guidance on best practices and how to effectively implement these activities would also likely be useful.

#### Key Finding #4: Equitable Access and Implementation Are Unclear

While by most measures, schools and districts and their various stakeholders self-report that their ACP efforts reach “all students” and “honor all possible post-secondary plans,” it cannot be assumed that ACP is being implemented equitably across Wisconsin. Eventually, output and outcome data should be able to shed more light on this question, but evidence about possible bias in program philosophy (gearing most activities toward one type of outcome or another) or potentially exclusionary practices (decision-making processes about which dual-credit applications to fund) came to light in the study. Costs associated with dual credit and similar opportunities in some schools or districts may pose opportunity/access gaps via the approval processes for taking advantage of these opportunities. Who decides whether to approve funding for a dual-credit course, particularly in the case of limited resources, and what do they base the approval criteria on? Is it done equitably? It may be possible to address these questions with additional research even before longitudinal data are available and analyzed.

**Recommendation:** DPI may wish pursue additional investigation into procedures for decision-making around financially constrained choices such as approving dual credit and dual enrollment in subsequent evaluation plans or otherwise.

#### Key Finding #5: Misunderstanding Interest Inventories

We repeatedly heard from students as well as teachers that one common activity, matching interests to potential careers, can be off-putting to many students. Students often derided the careers that were suggested to them based on their interests, and while a few used the opportunity to explore options not previously considered, most ignored the results. More distressingly, evaluators repeatedly heard students report that this activity undermined the credibility of the ACP process, and caused them to lose interest or not take subsequent activities seriously. Consequently, an effort to counter these possible reactions would be valuable.

**Recommendation:** DPI may consider developing and disseminating talking points and/or training around addressing student reactions to Interest Inventory career suggestions from Career Cruising Matchmaker and similar tools. Such communication or training would be intended to mitigate or prevent disengagement or lack of trust in the process on the part of students who are not interested in the career suggestions they receive. Activities such as asking students to identify the connections between

their interests and career suggestions or evaluating the reasons why they were uninterested in suggested careers could be useful exercises in processing and reflecting on the activity.

#### Key Finding #6: Staff Buy-In Growing; Professional Development Still Needed

While buy-in among staff continues to increase and responsibilities for ACP seem to be spreading from counselors and CTE teachers to all staff, one of the factors that most clearly affects staff buy-in is connected to their comfort level with delivering the curriculum. In addition to being presented with the reasons for the importance of a “schoolwide culture of ACP,” teachers need professional development that addresses their concerns about teaching “outside their area of expertise.” Moreover, in order to allow staff to attend such professional development, school and district leadership need to be aware of these challenges and concerns, and be convinced of the pay-off that the investment in this form of PD will have. On a related note, exactly what the construct of a “schoolwide culture of ACP” actually means is inconsistently defined. Some case study schools appeared to understand it to mean “all-staff participation” in ACP. In other districts, it was understood more as “all-staff buy-in” for ACP. There is likely considerable variation both between and within these two definitions. Furthermore, “schoolwide” likely involves more stakeholder groups than just staff. The necessity of administrative support and engagement has already been established, but what about the levels of awareness, buy-in, and engagement of students, families, and possible other stakeholders? Clarifying this construct through further research could prove valuable.

**Recommendation:** Further investigation into the construct of “schoolwide culture of ACP” would be useful. Comparing practice with longitudinal outcome data will likely shed light on this in the future, but collecting a greater catalogue of interpretations of this construct would be beneficial.

**Recommendation:** DPI should make sure that quality professional development, particularly for core content teachers, continues to be available, accessible, and targeted towards the appropriate audiences. In addition, communication to school and district leadership about not only the value of ACP, but also the importance of a “schoolwide culture” (particularly when a clear definition is arrived at), must continue from DPI, the relevant professional associations, CESAs, and other influencers. Progress towards including college and career readiness indicators on the state report cards will likely impact this effort.

#### Key Finding #7: There is Wide Variation in Dedicated ACP Time

Practices regarding regular, dedicated time for ACP in the school schedule varied from as little as 20 minutes per month to several full class periods per week. It may be useful to determine minimum or optimal amounts of time to spend on ACP activities in order to advise districts about best practices in this regard. Further work attempting to connect practices with student outcomes may be able to shed light on this question, but cataloguing how districts enact “dedicated time” (length of time period and frequency) will be necessary to make these connections.

**Recommendation:** Future evaluation should include survey questions that inquire about ACP dedicated time (length of periods and frequency, by grade) to inform eventual connections to outcome data.

**Recommendation:** Further investigation into minimum or optimal amounts of dedicated ACP time should be considered.

### Key Finding #8: Missed Communication Opportunities

Based primarily on websearch findings, data suggests that many schools and districts are missing opportunities to communicate their ACP work on their websites. Schools and their stakeholders could benefit from the communication of policies, practices, scope and sequence, events, success stories, opportunities for involvement, online tool access, and other topics.

**Recommendation:** DPI may wish to consider developing and providing districts with additional guidance about communicating ACP, going beyond the PI-26 requirements, such as information about developing an overall communication plan.

### Next Steps

In the coming years, WEC will continue the evaluation project, addressing these same evaluation questions, which are intended to draw connections between the infrastructural elements, student activities, and output and outcome data. Similar data sources and collection methods will be used, although the websearch will likely not be repeated. In addition, areas for possible further investigation have arisen from this year's evaluation and should be considered as additions to the scope of future evaluation work.

### Areas for Possible Further Investigation

**Family involvement in ACP.** Further exploration of the importance of family involvement in ACP across stakeholder groups seems warranted. Perspectives vary widely, particularly among students and family members, and it is likely important to better understand the range of opinion in order to successfully message DPI's philosophy of family involvement.

**Funding determinations.** When school or district financial constraints may impact the approval process for students' dual-credit or Early College Credit and other plans, wherein some students are approved and others are denied, there is the potential for inequitable access. This issue deserves additional attention, specifically with respect to when schools have to make choices about what/who to fund for dual credit or enrollment, who makes the choices, based on what criteria, and whether such decisions are made equitably.

**Schoolwide ACP culture.** An attempt to further understand and define this construct and potentially link real-world examples and outcomes would help to determine recommendations for best practices.

**ACP Time dosage.** More research regarding "dosage" of ACP may be useful to be able to make recommendations regarding best practices and minimum amounts for effectiveness. Given that the high-implementation districts we examined as case studies dedicated a minimum of one class period per week to ACP, and the low-implementation districts interviewed were devoting 1-2 class periods per month, a weekly "dose" may be the recommended minimum. The inclusion of questions in next year's survey that inquire about dosage, frequency, and length of class period could help to establish associations between dosage and outcomes.

## Appendix A: Case Study School Leaders Interview Protocol

### 2017-18 ACP Evaluation

#### Case Study Districts

#### Principal & School Counselor/ACP Coordinator Interview Protocols

#### HIGH MEAN INDEX SCHOOLS

*Customizing the Protocol for your particular interviewees:*

This is a protocol that will need to be highly customized for each interviewee. To do so,

- review the survey data for this school/district
- Review our websearch data for them
- do an updated websearch

In all of these, look for areas to explore and probe into more deeply. Be as aware of their ACP program as possible.

Then, using the topic guidelines below, create a customized protocol according to your background research to be able to get an accurate picture of

- what they are doing,
- how it came about,
- who's involved (and who's not)
- successes and challenges,
- evaluation and data use, and,
- In particular, INNOVATIVE PRACTICES.

In all cases, *look for artifacts both online and during the interview*, ask the respondent what they'd be willing to share and arrange to have them send it to you. (Follow-up with a thank-you email including a reminder that they'd send you X, Y, Z).

Main topic areas to include:

1. **Infrastructure and student activities for ACP** - details/clarifiers about what they look like, particularly in terms of the list of infrastructure and activities of focus from the survey (Q11 or Q37), their levels of implementation (anything stick out? - compare to the overall in survey report Tables 10-16). Ask for any artifacts/ examples of interesting/successful/institutionalized practices.
2. **EQUITABLE**: From the various ACP services the school/district is offering - whether they are dual credit options, Work-based learning experiences, Career & Tech ed courses, co-curriculars, community service, etc. *We want to be able to talk about which of the services offered by the school/district are offered to ALL students? Which of them are only offered to some? Are students w/ disabilities excluded? What about English language learners? Is it something ALL*

*students even know about and can access? Answers to these questions are important because they determine whether ACP delivery is actually equitably provided to ALL students.*

*Do the background research first, and construct your questions **carefully**. For example, “Who all is able to participate in dual-credit options?” “Are there any students that aren’t able to do so?” If so, who? If they answer generically that “everyone” can, ask “What about ELLs?” etc.*

**3. Family awareness and engagement.** Look at survey and particularly website info as one means for communication / awareness.

- a. How do you **INFORM** families about ACP? Which means seem most successful? How do they know that? What is the level of family KNOWLEDGE / AWARENESS around ACP? Has this changed over the last few years, and if so, why?
- b. How do you **ENGAGE** families around ACP? What is the level of engagement around ACP (participation rate)? What is the general level of family engagement/participation in school activities overall? Has ACP engagement changed in the last few years, and if so, how? See if they’ll share any communication / engagement materials.

**4. DATA COLLECTION and USE** around ACP. (See survey data to see what they collect, and find out whether/how they use it. Decision-making? PD? Curricular changes?)

Additional question (to be used, omitted, modified as context demands)

1. Is there an ACP team, an ACP coordinator or other personnel “in charge” of ACP in your school/district? What are those people’s roles otherwise? *This might be a good introductory question.*
2. How has your ACP plan evolved over time?
3. What does your scope and sequence look like? (can it be shared?)
4. How are you delivering PD around ACP? What PD? When? To Whom? Who’s delivering it?
5. Describe your collaboration with local businesses / employers.
6. Describe your collaboration with local community organizations around ACP.
7. What would you consider your biggest success(es)? Challenge(s)? What barriers have you overcome (and how) to be able to implement ACP
8. Do you have any sort of evaluation process or continuous improvement process for your ACP plan? Basically, how do you know whether your ACP is “working”?
9. *For school counselors:* what is your role in ACP? Who else is involved? How much of the burden”

## Appendix B: Case Study Focus Group Protocols

### ACP Evaluation – Year 3 (2017-18)

#### Teacher Focus Group Protocol - for high index scores

February 12, 2018

[Addresses Eval Q2 & 3 and all outputs]

- Your name, assistant moderator's name, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Statewide evaluation of Academic and Career Planning
- Talking to groups of educators around the state
- We heard your schools are 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. Introduce topic of "Academic and Career Planning"? (*Or substitute a different name if district has branded it otherwise*). What do you know about (ACP)? What does (ACP) involve at your school? (*check against info that you have--compile a list of activities in advance, so keep this as brief as possible*)
2. Who is ACP for? *Probe for all or sub-groups, that are/aren't*. How do you know? Who does it most benefit? Who's being left out?
3. How has implementation of ACP changed your school? (*Try open-ended first, if needed, probe for changes in schedule, attitudes, goals, priorities, morale, student engagement.*) How has it changed student readiness for career and college?
4. *Check survey/websearch for existence of an ACP scope & sequence, and ask as appropriate*: How scaffolded is the ACP curriculum? How developmentally appropriate? *Probe for examples, details.*
5. How are you personally involved in ACP? Which staff teach the ACP curriculum? *Probe for evidence of all-staff participation. If all-staff are participating*: How was your school/district able to bring about a schoolwide culture of ACP? What were some of the challenges/hurdles? How were they overcome?
6. What professional development around ACP have you participated in? Who provided the PD? Was it sufficient to prepare you for delivering your ACP-related activities or curriculum? What additional training and/or resources do you need?
7. Has ACP changed the nature of teacher and student relationships? How so?
8. How has ACP changed the student course selection process, if at all? *Probe for details, examples.*

9. Do you think students have a clearer idea of a post-secondary plan as a result of ACP activities?  
How do you know? (*or otherwise probe for details, examples*).
10. How could (ACP) be improved? What would make it better?
11. What else would you like to tell us about your impressions of (ACP?)

**ACP Evaluation – Year 3 (2017-18)**  
**Parent Focus Group Protocol**  
**February 12, 2018**

[Addresses Eval Q2 & 3 and the following outputs: schoolwide culture, family engagement, equitable access, work-based learning, dual credit/certs, ed & career goals, applicable course taking]

- Your name, assistant moderator's name, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Statewide evaluation of Academic and Career Planning
- Talking to groups of parents around the state
- We heard your kids' schools are 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. Introduce topic of "Academic and Career Planning"? *(Or substitute a different name if district has branded it otherwise)*. "ACP is a series of activities and lessons that are used by students to create a plan for high school and afterwards--it's to help make sure that all students are college and career ready." What, if anything, have you heard about (ACP)? How did you find out about it? What does (ACP) involve at your kids' school? Who communicated about it to you? How was it communicated (email, newsletter, other)?
2. What do you know/understand to be the purpose of (ACP)? *Probe for goals, outcomes, rationale, etc.*
3. Who is ACP for? *Probe for all or sub-groups, that are/aren't*. How do you know? Who does it most benefit?
4. Do you think ACP is benefitting your student(s)? How?
5. What, if any, activities has your student talked about doing regarding ACP, i.e., college or careers? How did they seem to feel about those activities? What are your impressions of those activities? Valuable? Otherwise?
6. What ACP activities, if any, have you participated in? How would you, as parents and family members, like to be engaged in ACP?
7. Does your student have an assigned advisor or mentor?
  - a. *If yes*, what do they talk about? Do you think that's a helpful relationship? How so?
  - b. *If no*, who can they talk to if they have questions about their ACP?
8. How does your student choose their (high school) courses? How do they decide what to take? Who supports and guides their decisions?

9. Has your child talked about any work-based learning opportunities, such as internships, job shadows, youth apprenticeships, etc.? *Probe for details.*
10. How could (ACP) be improved? What would make it better?
11. What else would you like to tell us about your impressions of (ACP?)

**ACP Evaluation – Year 3 (2017-18)**  
**Student Focus Group Protocol**  
**February 12, 2018**

[Addresses Eval Q's 2 & 3, all outputs]

**Intro:**

- Your name, assistant moderator's name, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Statewide evaluation of Academic and Career Planning
- Talking to groups of 11<sup>th</sup> graders and 8<sup>th</sup> 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. Introduce the topic of "Academic and Career Planning"? *(Or substitute a different name if district has branded it otherwise)*. 11th graders:: "ACP are the activities that help you plan what to take during high school, to get you ready for after you graduate." 8th graders: ACP are the activities you do to try to figure out what you're interested in, and maybe what you want to do when you get older."
2. What do think the purpose (goals) of (ACP) is?
3. Who is ACP for? (all kids, kids who want to go to tech colleges, etc.) Probe – who is best served/helped by this program? Who doesn't do ACP in your school?
4. What kinds of activities have you done (in Middle School / in High School) that are related to ACP? – *might get this from the district/school plan, but also important to capture their perceptions*. Probe: In which grades? Does EVERYONE in your grade do these activities? If not, who doesn't? How do you know?
5. Where/when do you do these activities? – *Can be eliminated if info is available from school/district plan.*
6. Do you have an assigned advisor or mentor? - *check website, etc. and modify if needed*
  - a. *If yes*, How often do you meet with him/her? What do you talk about?
  - b. *If no*, Who can you talk to if you have questions about your ACP?
7. Have you done any work-based learning, like internships, or youth apprenticeships, or job shadows, etc.?
  - a. *If yes*, what did you learn from it? Was it worthwhile?

- b. *If no*, are they available? Do you plan to take advantage of them? Why (not)?
- 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. How are your families (parents) involved in ACP? Probe for specifics, how many families are involved in these activities? (if no involvement, ask how much parents are aware of ACP).
  - a. What can the school do to better engage your families?
- 12. See district survey data re Q4 (levels of engagement for various stakeholder groups) for the school/district in question , and probe for more details as relevant)
- 13. Do you think ACP is benefitting you? How/why not? If you had the choice, would you do ACP or not?
- 14. 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?*)
- 15. [How could (ACP) be improved? / What would make it better? ]
- 16. [What else would you like to tell us about (ACP)?]

## Appendix C: Low Implementation Schools - School Leader Interview Protocol

### 2017-18 ACP Evaluation

#### Case Study Districts

#### Principal & School Counselor/ACP Coordinator Interview Protocols

#### LOW MEAN INDEX SCHOOLS:

*Customizing the Protocol for your particular interviewees:*

This is a protocol that will need to be highly customized for each interviewee. To do so,

- review the survey data for this school/district
- review our websearch data for them
- do an updated websearch

In all of these, look for areas to explore and probe into more deeply. Be as aware of their ACP program as possible.

Then, using the topic guidelines below, create a customized protocol according to your background research to be able to get an accurate picture of

- what they are doing,
- how it came about,
- who's involved (and who's not)
- successes and challenges,

1. Is there an ACP team, an ACP coordinator or other personnel "in charge" of ACP in your school/district? What are those people's roles otherwise?
2. How's the ACP work coming along? (*Might review highlights of where they were at at the time of the survey, and ask where any progress might have been made?*)
3. Have you attended any PD around ACP at CESAs? Collaborated with any other districts regarding ACP?
4. What successes have you experienced this year? Challenges?
5. What are the principal barriers to implementing ACP?
6. What, if anything, have you tried in order to address these barriers?
7. What kind of resources or support do you need?