



Wisconsin
Evaluation
Collaborative

01

**Academic
& Career
Planning
Brief Series**

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COVID INNOVATIONS

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, educators have shown resilience in finding new ways to continue to engage students and their families, whether remotely, in person, or in hybrid situations. This report, based on data collected from the ACP survey fielded in Spring 2021, shares innovative practices and resources that educators developed to continue providing quality ACP instruction and activities during COVID-19. Many of these practices may also be beneficial during and beyond the pandemic for schools looking to restart, revamp, or refine their ACP programs.

Key findings explained and exemplified with quotes from educators

Although the majority of schools responding to the survey reported having to curtail their ACP programs to some extent during the 2020-21 school year, many activities were adjusted for remote instruction. The types of activities most typically omitted were those that required in-person interaction, such as student volunteer/service requirements or senior interviews or presentations, although more often, these activities were adjusted for remote instruction.

Conferencing

Whether one-on-one student or family conferencing, many describing a switch to remote/online conferences noted increased participation, and planned to maintain this practice.

“In the counseling department, we have seen a massive positive shift in parent involvement with our college and career planning conferences when we began to offer them virtually. We were surprised at the significant attendance jump with just the option to attend remotely and this will for sure be an option we continue to offer in the future.”

“Having a virtual component to 8th Grade Planning Conferences allowed parents to be more included in the process by allowing more flexibility in their work schedules. Having to do things virtually really challenged us to think outside the box about how to incorporate a meaningful experience that we [can use] in the future.”

Integration of ACP into content areas

With the switch to remote instruction, some schools eliminated homerooms/advisories and instead integrated ACP material into other content areas. Some reported that this helped boost the schoolwide culture of ACP by involving additional staff members.

“We are teaching ACP lessons as integrated pieces of core instruction for certain grades, and offering separate ACP times/lessons for other grades. This depends on the schedule, the virtual/livestream options, and availability of staff.”

Increased ACP time

Sometimes as a result of changed schedules and/or cohorting for remote instruction, homerooms and advisories have been lengthened or held more frequently, with more time devoted to ACP.

Consequently, some reported, this resulted in stronger teacher-student relationships and increased buy-in for ACP from staff.

“The most impactful new practice has been that we tweaked our schedule this year to include a 30-minute Student Success Time (SST) every Tuesday. (...) Twice per month it is used for ACP lessons and twice per month it is used for SEL lessons. It is the first time we have had a dedicated advisory as the platform for ACP delivery and it has been a great success.”

“We have also moved our entire career planning/class registration process to an online model through our Advisory period that we will continue to have after this year. (...) We have offered a large variety of team-building activities this year to help form relationships between the students and the advisor. Because of the cohort model, the advisory classrooms have shrunk to very small sizes which allows for more personalized one-on-one attention from the advisor instructor.”

Video/recorded ACP lessons

Pre-recorded ACP lessons, typically made by ACP coordinators and counselors, allowed for consistent delivery across classrooms and teachers during homerooms, advisories, or other ACP times; reduced the preparation time for teachers; and allowed for “flipped classrooms” where instructional time could be spent on more individualized activities, follow-up, and mentoring.

“I began finding and using videos to highlight college and career pathways. We do plan to continue this as a more engaging way to make students aware of career and college possibilities.”

“Having all lessons in one system is great for consistency and equity.”

“[We’ve used] more pre-recorded webinars and information as well as live broadcasts that families can access at the same time as students.”

Virtual opportunities

Educators created and/or found virtual career awareness speakers, college & career fairs, campus visits, field trips, mock interviews, ACT bootcamps, and virtual office hours with counselors. Virtual conferencing tools and online resources enabled these changes, and often resulted in increased access and participation for staff, students, and families.

“Virtual Career Awareness Speakers ...allowed us to create a Virtual Library of our local businesses.”

“Offering virtual mock job interviews with community members. This is relevant to today’s job seeking world and will continue.”

“The virtual college tours were still effective and beneficial. Students enjoyed them.”

“I think we will continue to offer some presentations virtually. It seems to work well for both students and presenter. The students don’t feel forced to talk when they don’t want to, and they have told me they like asking questions in chat instead.”

“Zoom meetings with business partners and speakers has actually worked out really for both parties! (...) Virtual speakers don’t have to leave home or workspace and students still get an interactive experience.”

“We created a virtual counseling office and the students love it.”



Summary & Resource Connections

At the time of this publication, there is still uncertainty about how school will look in the 2021-22 school year in terms of face-to-face, remote, and hybrid instruction. What is certain, though, is that dedicated educators found innovative solutions for continuing to deliver ACP instruction to their students in 2020-21, and often found that these innovations were preferable to their traditional approaches. Resources for learning more about these and other innovations:

- [DPI's ACP website](#)
- [Contact](#) your CESA ACP coordinator
- ACP Listserv - Provides updates regarding Academic and Career Planning in Wisconsin. To subscribe, send an email with the subject line "subscribe" to subscribe-acplist@lists.dpi.wi.gov
- [Career Readiness Community of Practice](#)
- [HIGH-QUALITY CTE DURING COVID-19: Leveraging Federal Relief Funds at the Local Level](#) (Spending Ideas on pages 12-20)
- [Virtual Job Spotlight Guide](#)
- [Wisconsin ACP Xello lessons progression with learning targets and teacher notes](#)
- CESA's [Virtual Career Symposium](#)
- CESAs 8 & 9 [Virtual Job Spotlight channel on Youtube](#)

About the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative

The Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) is housed at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. WEC's team of evaluators supports youth-serving organizations and initiatives through culturally responsive and rigorous program evaluation. Learn more at <http://www.wec.wceruw.org>.