Academic and Career Planning Statewide Survey Report

for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction | 2022-23

About the Authors

GRANT SIM

Grant Sim is a Scientist at the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative, specializing in mixed methods program evaluation of educational initiatives at both the state and district levels. He holds a master's degree in public affairs from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

ROBIN WORTH

Robin Worth is a Scientist with the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative specializing in qualitative methods of evaluation and focusing on Career Readiness initiatives. She holds a Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with an emphasis in foreign language pedagogy and qualitative classroom research.

BRIE CHAPA

Brie Chapa is a Data Scientist with the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative. She holds a B.S. in Secondary Mathematics Education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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.

CONTACT

Grant Sim

grant.sim@wisc.edu

Acknowledgements

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Section 1

Introduction

Introduction

As part of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Academic and Career Planning (ACP) evaluation, Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) evaluators at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research fielded a survey to ACP coordinators and principals of Wisconsin public schools with any of grades 6 through 12. The purpose of this survey was to gather information related to ACP implementation during the 2022–23 school year. Specific areas of interest were perceptions of ACP component implementation, ACP culture, equitable practices, communication and engagement, and relationship building.

WEC opened the survey on January 30, 2023, and sent it to school staff representing 1,229 ACP schools in Wisconsin. The survey closed on February 28, 2023. The distribution attempted to contact ACP coordinators at each school using information provided by each Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA). Where information was not available for a school's ACP coordinator, the distribution contacted that school's principal. The total number of schools with a response was 414, with 313 completing the full survey for a response rate of 34 percent and a completion rate of 76 percent. For reference, each of the tables and figures in this report provides the exact number of respondents to the item(s) displayed.

Section 2

Respondent Demographics

Respondent Demographics

This section of the report provides information on the respondents to the survey to give context to results. Overall, responses to the survey came from 265 districts across the state. Table I shows counts of responding schools and a response rate by CESA region. Figure I provides information on the role of the respondents and shows that a majority of respondents were school counselors.

Table I: Respondents by CESA Region

(N=414)

CESA REGION	NUMBER OF RESPONDING SCHOOLS	RESPONSE RATE
CESA 1	72	28%
CESA 2	65	36%
CESA 3	29	44%
CESA 4	26	39%
CESA 5	33	33%
CESA 6	44	33%
CESA 7	28	25%
CESA 8	27	47%
CESA 9	27	48%
CESA 10	17	25%
CESA 11	30	32%
CESA 12	16	40%

Figure 1: Roles of Respondents

(N=411)

Role	Percentage
School counselor	68%
ACP coordinator	47%
Principal	7%
Other	18%
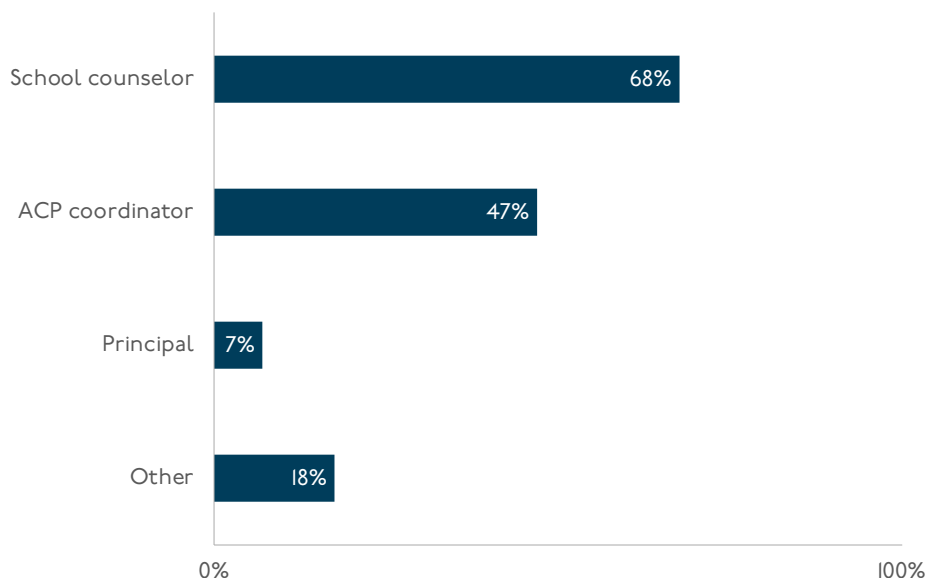
Note: Respondents were able to indicate more than one role; the total may be greater than 100 percent.

To further examine the types of schools respondents worked in, the survey asked respondents which grade levels their school serves. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of responses to this item. There was roughly equal representation of grades 7-12 with approximately 70 percent of respondents working in a school serving each of those grades. Slightly fewer respondents, 63 percent, worked in schools serving grade 6.

Figure 2: Grades Served in Respondents' Schools

(N=414)

Grade	Percentage
Grade 6	63%
Grade 7	69%
Grade 8	70%
Grade 9	69%
Grade 10	69%
Grade 11	70%
Grade 12	70%
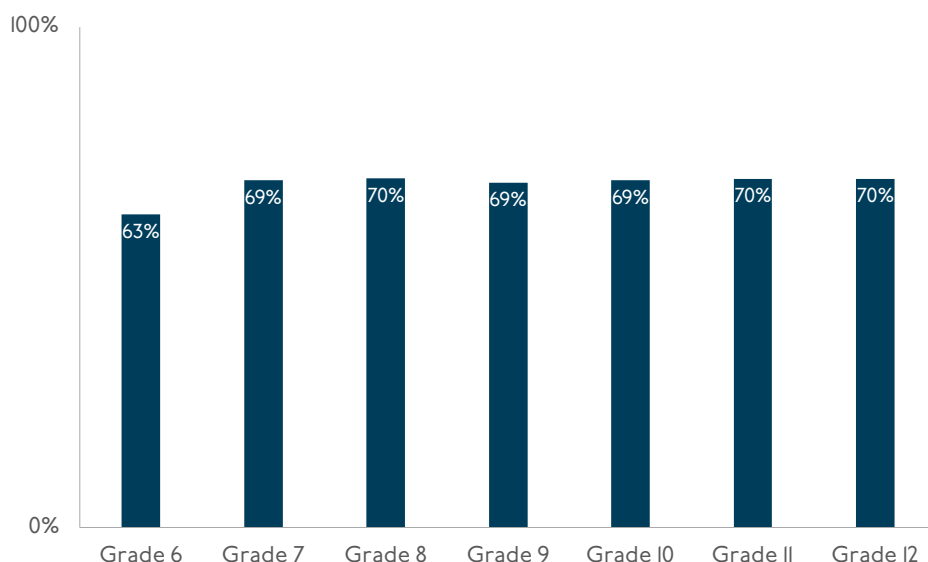
Note: Respondents were able to indicate more than one grade; the total may be greater than 100 percent.

Section 3

ACP Implementation

ACP Implementation

The first area of focus on the survey, and similar to surveys since full implementation in 2017-18, was the level of implementation for certain ACP practices. The survey asked about a wide variety of these practices, which fell into four larger categories: overall ACP infrastructure and systems; school-wide culture of ACP; stakeholder engagement; and informing/engaging students in activities. For each practice, the survey asked respondents to rate the level of implementation:

- Institutionalized: Has become an essential part of the school structure and culture. ACP is a clear part of the vision and embedded into policies and strategic goals.

- Implemented: Fully implemented across all grade levels but often relies on one or a few people and is likely to fall apart with staff or leadership turnover.

- Initiated: At the beginning stages. Just getting started, often in pockets rather than across all grade levels and faculty.

- Not yet started: Not implementing or working to get started.

Figure 3 shows the proportion of respondents indicating the level of implementation of ACP practices related to overall ACP infrastructure or systems within a school. Practices with high levels of reported implementation included provision of equitable access (80 percent institutionalized or implemented) and providing regular, ongoing, supportive, and safe student relationships with adults (80 percent institutionalized or implemented). The area with the lowest level of implementation, with nearly a third of responding schools indicating they had not yet started the practice, was providing ACP professional development for all teachers. Given the low rates of schools reporting institutionalized or implemented levels of this practice, this is a clear area of improvement for ACP.

As several of these infrastructure-related practices were examined during the previous statewide surveys in 2019-20 and 2020-21, this report also shows how implementation of the practices has changed. To allow for accurate comparisons over time, only the 70 schools responding to all three surveys were included in this longitudinal examination. Figure 4 shows the percentage of schools indicating an institutionalized or implemented level for three of the practices. While providing equitable access and providing regular, ongoing, supportive, and safe student relationships with adults have remained at high levels of implementation over time, providing regular, dedicated time for ACP activities has decreased in implementation.

Figure 3: ACP Practices and Level of Implementation, ACP Infrastructure

(N=333–334)

Practice	Institutionalized	Implemented	Initiated	Not Started Yet
Providing equitable access to ACP for all students in grades 6–12	33%	47%	17%	3%
Providing regular, ongoing, supportive, and safe student relationships with adults	32%	48%	17%	3%
Aligning ACP activities from middle school/junior high to high school	22%	40%	32%	6%
Providing regular, dedicated time for ACP activities	11%	32%	44%	12%
Providing ACP professional development for all teachers	6%	25%	37%	31%

0% — 100%

■ INSTITUTIONALIZED   ■ IMPLEMENTED   ■ INITIATED   ■ NOT STARTED YET

Figure 4: Institutionalized and Implemented ACP Practices Over Time, ACP Infrastucture

(N=70)

Practice	2019-20	2020-21	2022-23
Providing equitable access to ACP for all students in grades 6–12	87%	89%	90%
Providing regular, ongoing, supportive, and safe student relationships with adults	81%	84%	89%
Providing regular, dedicated time for ACP activities	86%	76%	53%

■ 2019-20   ■ 2020-21   ■ 2022-23

Figure 5 shows the results from the implementation items related to school-wide culture. A vast majority of schools responded that they had either institutionalized or implemented the practice of having an 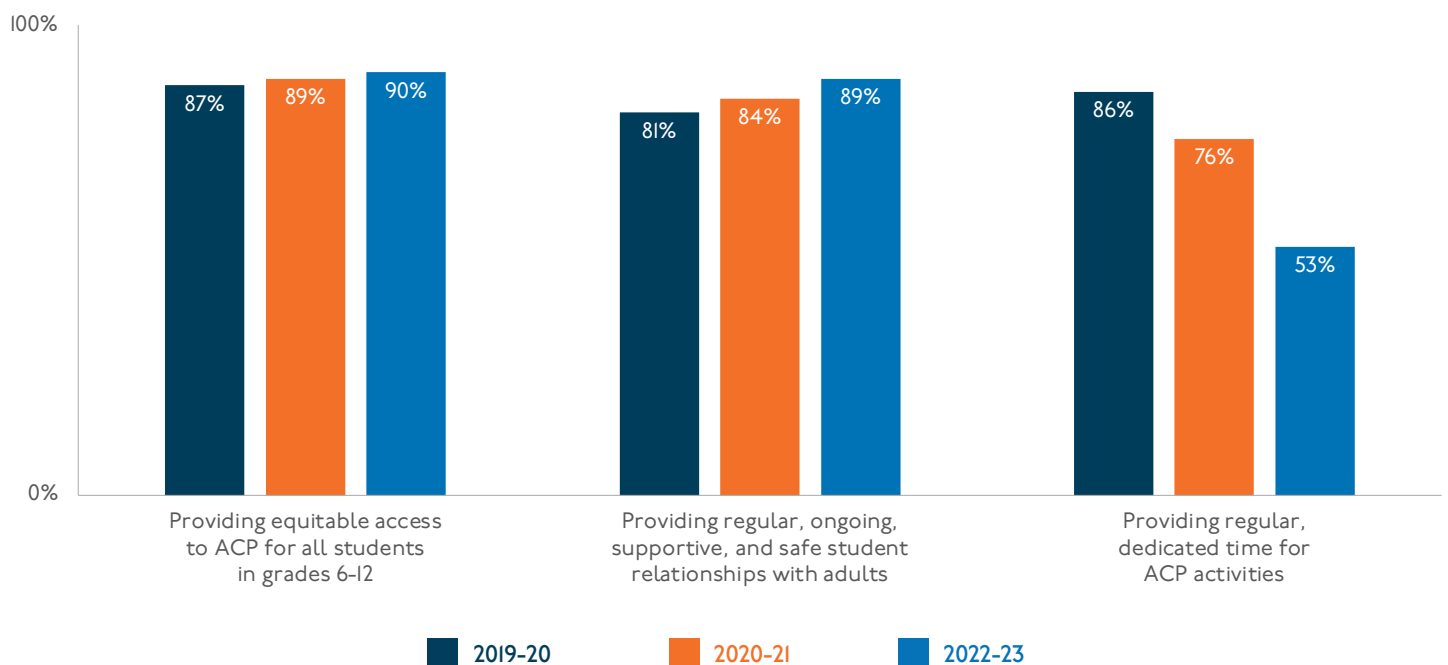inclusive school/district-wide culture around ACP. However, specific aspects of ACP culture, namely having administrative engagement and full staff participation in ACP, were implemented at lower levels, with just over half of the schools reporting these practices were at the institutionalized or implemented levels.

Figure 6 shows how the practices related to school-wide culture have evolved over time. While the percentage of schools indicating an institutionalized or implemented level of administrative engagement has been declining, there has been a large increase in the institutionalized or implemented practice of having an inclusive school/district-wide culture around ACP over the same time period.

Figure 5: ACP Practices and Level of Implementation, School-Wide Culture
(N=331–334)

Practice	Institutionalized	Implemented	Initiated	Not Started Yet
Having an inclusive school/district-wide culture around ACP	57%	36%	6%	1%
Having administrative engagement in ACP	14%	43%	37%	7%
Having full staff participation in ACP	13%	40%	37%	11%
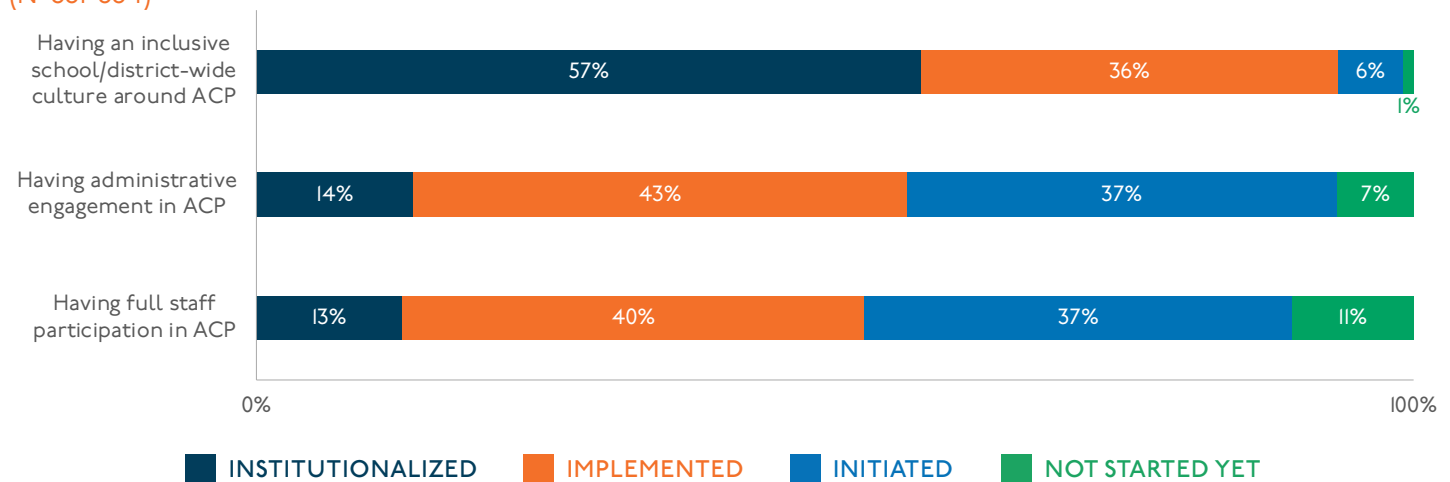
Figure 6: Institutionalized and Implemented ACP Practices Over Time, School-Wide Culture
(N=70)

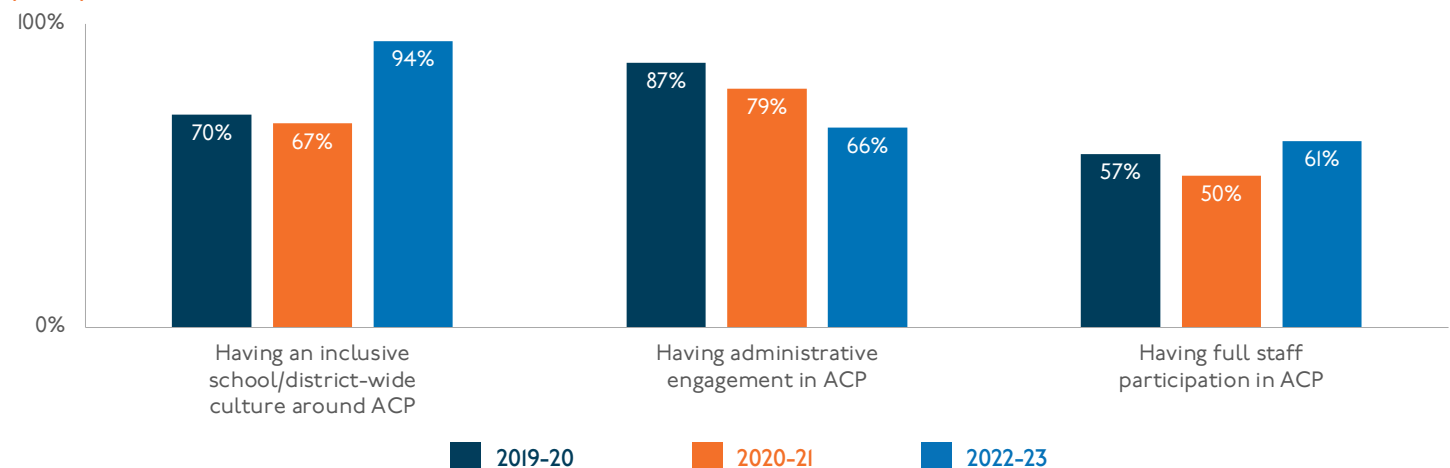| Practice	2019-20	2020-21	2022-23
Having an inclusive school/district-wide culture around ACP	70%	67%	94%
Having administrative engagement in ACP	87%	79%	66%
Having full staff participation in ACP	57%	50%	61%

Figure 7 shows the results from the implementation items related to stakeholder engagement. Responding schools generally reported higher levels of regularly engaging local businesses in ACP (65 percent reporting institutionalized or implemented), and lower levels of regularly engaging families and the local community in ACP (43 percent and 35 percent respectively).

The only one of these stakeholder engagement practices included in previous surveys was regularly engaging families in their students' ACP. As Figure 8 shows, this practice increased in implementation in 2020-21 and has slightly increased since then.

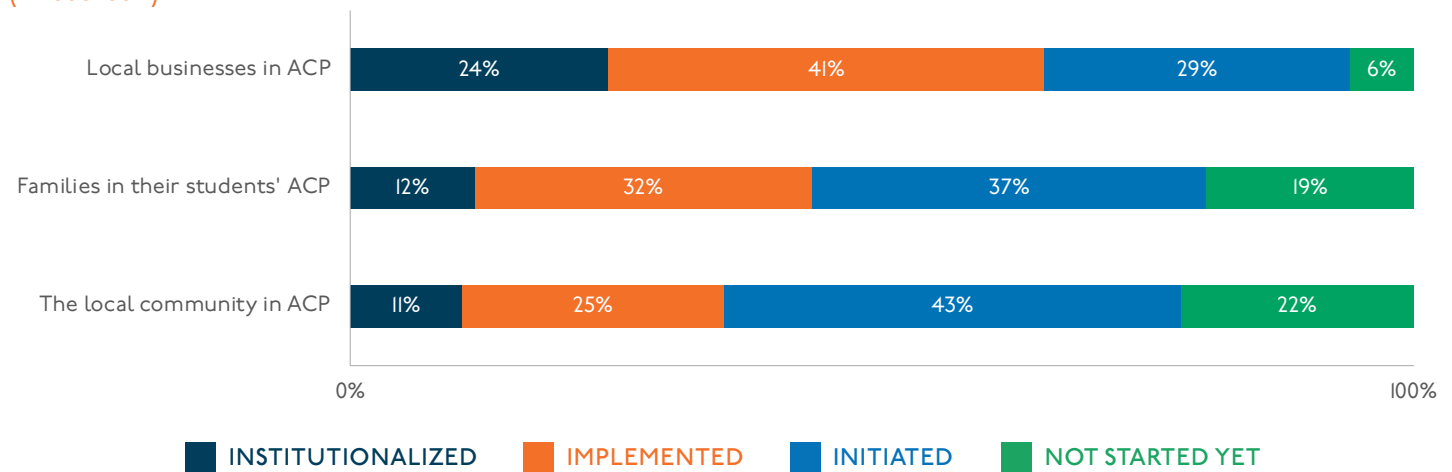## Figure 7: ACP Practices and Level of Implementation, Stakeholder Engagement
(N=333-334)

- Local businesses in ACP: INSTITUTIONALIZED 24% | IMPLEMENTED 41% | INITIATED 29% | NOT STARTED YET 6%
- Families in their students' ACP: INSTITUTIONALIZED 12% | IMPLEMENTED 32% | INITIATED 37% | NOT STARTED YET 19%
- The local community in ACP: INSTITUTIONALIZED 11% | IMPLEMENTED 25% | INITIATED 43% | NOT STARTED YET 22%

Legend: INSTITUTIONALIZED | IMPLEMENTED | INITIATED | NOT STARTED YET

Figure 8: Institutionalized and Implemented ACP Practices Over Time, Stakeholder Engagement
(N=70)

Regularly engaging families in their students' ACP
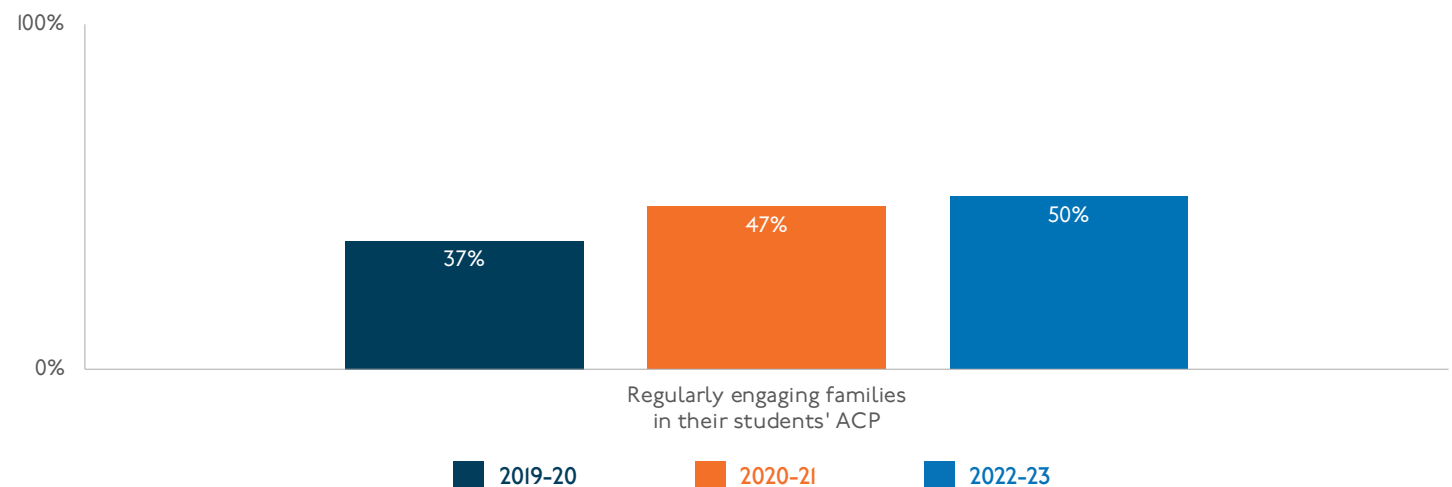- 2019-20: 37%
- 2020-21: 47%
- 2022-23: 50%

Figure 9 shows the results from the implementation items related to informing and encouraging student participation in select ACP activities. As seen in this figure, over three-quarters of responding schools indicated that they inform/encourage students about dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) opportunities at the institutionalized or implemented level. Slightly fewer schools, but still a majority, reported informing/encouraging students about work-based learning, Career Pathways, and industry recognized credentials at the institutionalized or implemented levels.

Figure 10 tracks the implementation of the student participation practices over time, showing relatively stable rates of reported implementation of these practices. One exception is informing or encouraging students about Career Pathways, which has increased in reported implementation since 2019-20.

Figure 9: ACP Practices and Level of Implementation, Informing and Encouraging Student Participation
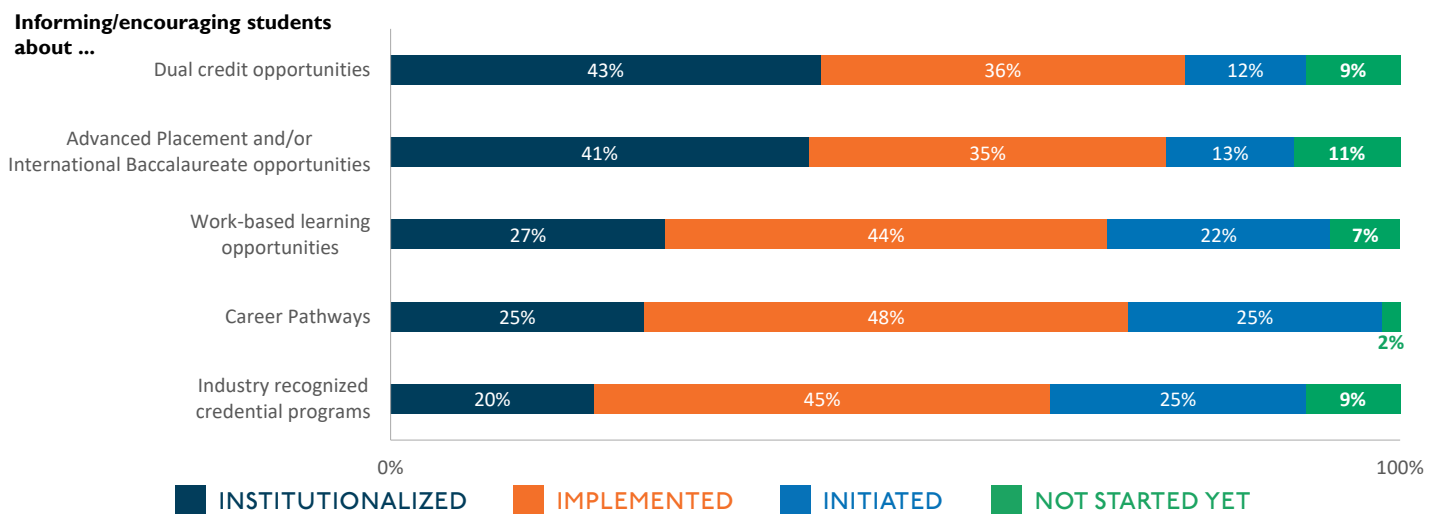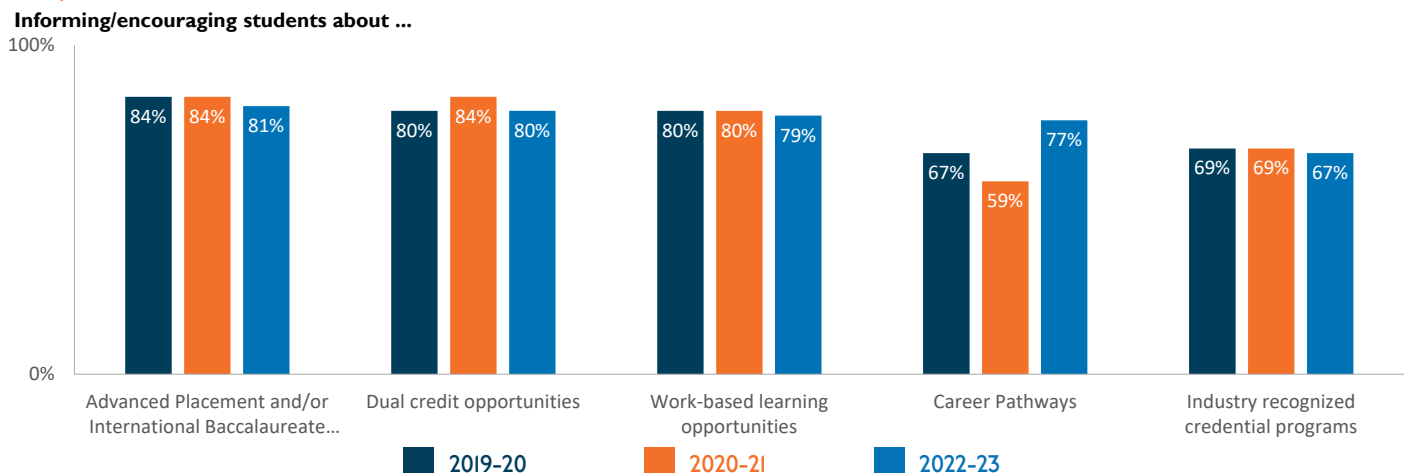
(N=332-334)

Informing/encouraging students about ...

	INSTITUTIONALIZED	IMPLEMENTED	INITIATED	NOT STARTED YET
Dual credit opportunities	43%	36%	12%	9%
Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate opportunities	41%	35%	13%	11%
Work-based learning opportunities	27%	44%	22%	7%
Career Pathways	25%	48%	25%	2%
Industry recognized credential programs	20%	45%	25%	9%

0% — 100%

Figure 10: Institutionalized and Implemented ACP Practices Over Time, Informing and Encouraging Student Participation

(N=70)

Informing/encouraging students about ...

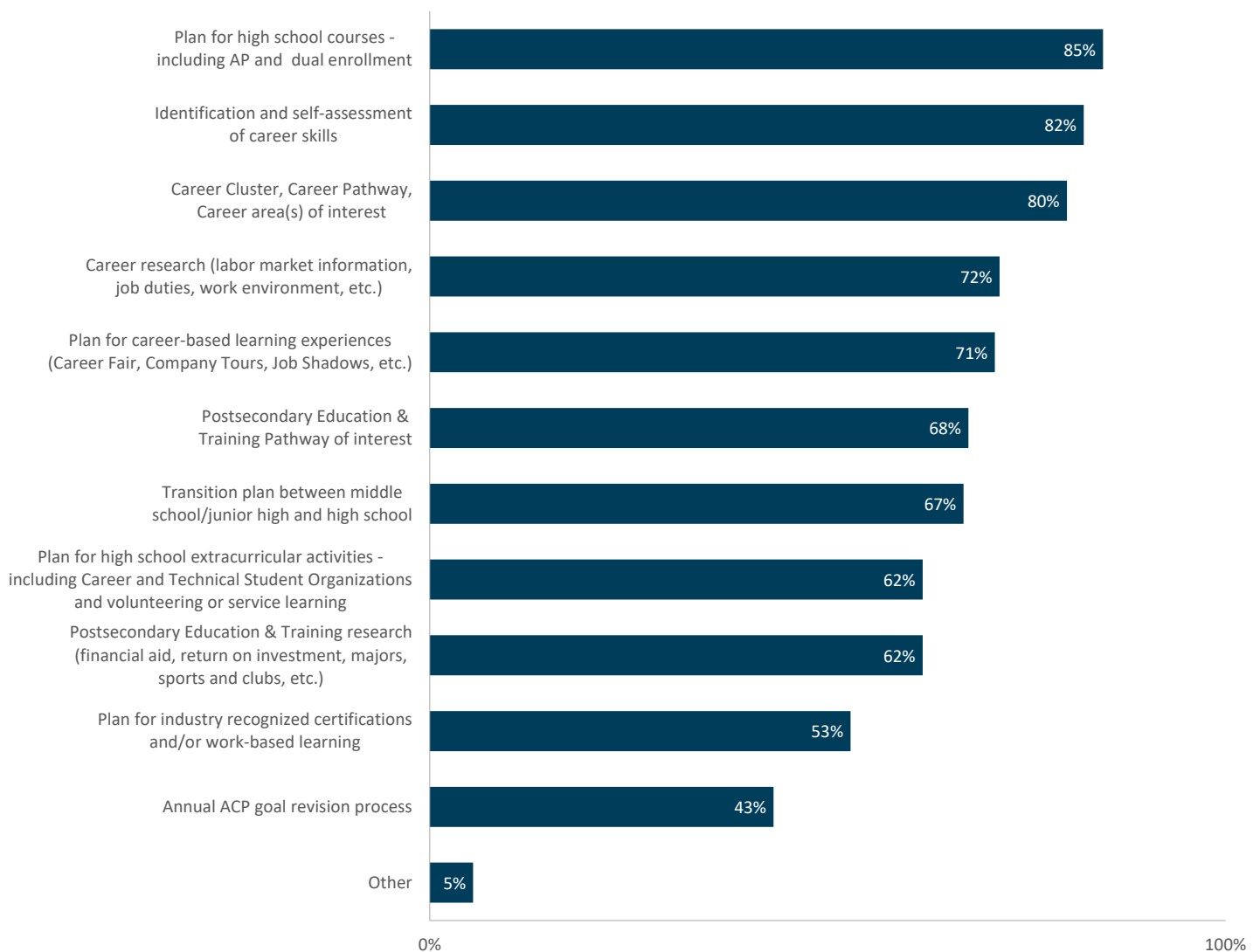|	2019-20	2020-21	2022-23
Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate...	84%	84%	81%
Dual credit opportunities	80%	84%	80%
Work-based learning opportunities	80%	80%	79%
Career Pathways	67%	59%	77%
Industry recognized credential programs	69%	69%	67%

Another way the survey examined ACP implementation was to ask schools about the components their students' ACP plans included. Figure 11 shows the results from this item. Most schools reported that ACP plans include a plan for high school courses, the identification and self-assessment of career skills, or career areas of interest. Less than half of responding schools indicated that ACP plans included an annual goal revision process.

Other components of ACP plans reported (n=17) were events attended (such as career fairs or college visits), Xello activities completed, interests and learning styles, and e-portfolio projects.

Figure 11: ACP Plan Components

(N=331)

Component	Percentage
Plan for high school courses - including AP and dual enrollment	85%
Identification and self-assessment of career skills	82%
Career Cluster, Career Pathway, Career area(s) of interest	80%
Career research (labor market information, job duties, work environment, etc.)	72%
Plan for career-based learning experiences (Career Fair, Company Tours, Job Shadows, etc.)	71%
Postsecondary Education & Training Pathway of interest	68%
Transition plan between middle school/junior high and high school	67%
Plan for high school extracurricular activities - including Career and Technical Student Organizations and volunteering or service learning	62%
Postsecondary Education & Training research (financial aid, return on investment, majors, sports and clubs, etc.)	62%
Plan for industry recognized certifications and/or work-based learning	53%
Annual ACP goal revision process	43%
Other	5%

Section 4

ACP Culture

ACP Culture

The next aspect of ACP examined by the 2022-23 survey was ACP culture as measured by reported levels of staff and student knowledge. If staff and students have higher levels of knowledge regarding certain aspects of how ACP operates within their school or district, it is an indication of a more thoroughly developed ACP culture. Figure 12 shows reported levels of staff knowledge regarding ACP. A majority of schools indicated that staff had very high or somewhat high levels of knowledge regarding the "ACP experts" in their school and the importance of career readiness. Closer to one-quarter of schools indicated high levels of staff knowledge of how they can support students' ACPs, of their roles and responsibilities within ACP, and of their districts' plans for ACP implementation. Schools looking to increase the level of ACP culture may want to provide staff with professional development in these areas.

Figure 12: Staff Knowledge of ACP

(N=324-325)

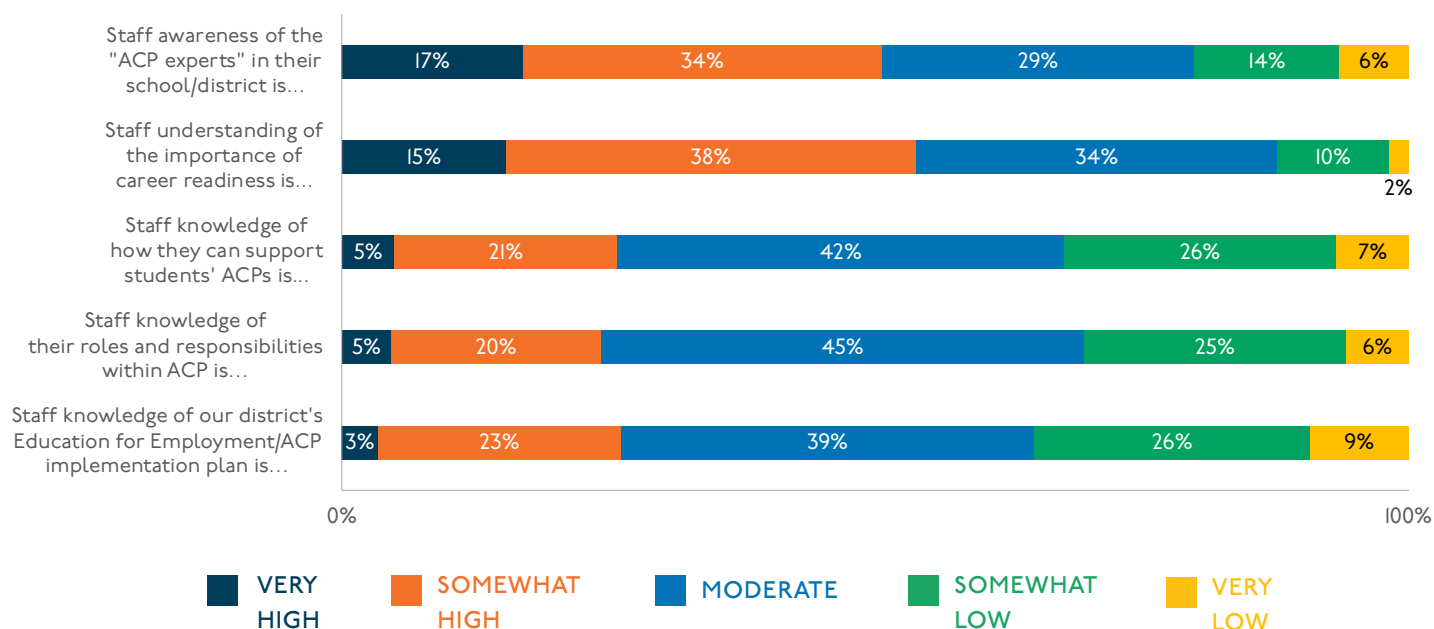|	VERY HIGH	SOMEWHAT HIGH	MODERATE	SOMEWHAT LOW	VERY LOW
Staff awareness of the "ACP experts" in their school/district is…	17%	34%	29%	14%	6%
Staff understanding of the importance of career readiness is…	15%	38%	34%	10%	2%
Staff knowledge of how they can support students' ACPs is…	5%	21%	42%	26%	7%
Staff knowledge of their roles and responsibilities within ACP is…	5%	20%	45%	25%	6%
Staff knowledge of our district's Education for Employment/ACP implementation plan is…	3%	23%	39%	26%	9%

Figure 13 shows the reported levels of student knowledge of ACP. Approximately two-thirds of schools reported that students had very or somewhat high awareness of whom to talk to about career readiness in their school. Less than half of schools, however, indicated the same level of student knowledge regarding the importance of career readiness, ACP components, or their roles and responsibilities within ACP. As with staff knowledge, schools looking to increase student buy-in towards ACP may seek to improve in these areas.

Figure 13: Student Knowledge of ACP

(N=324–325)
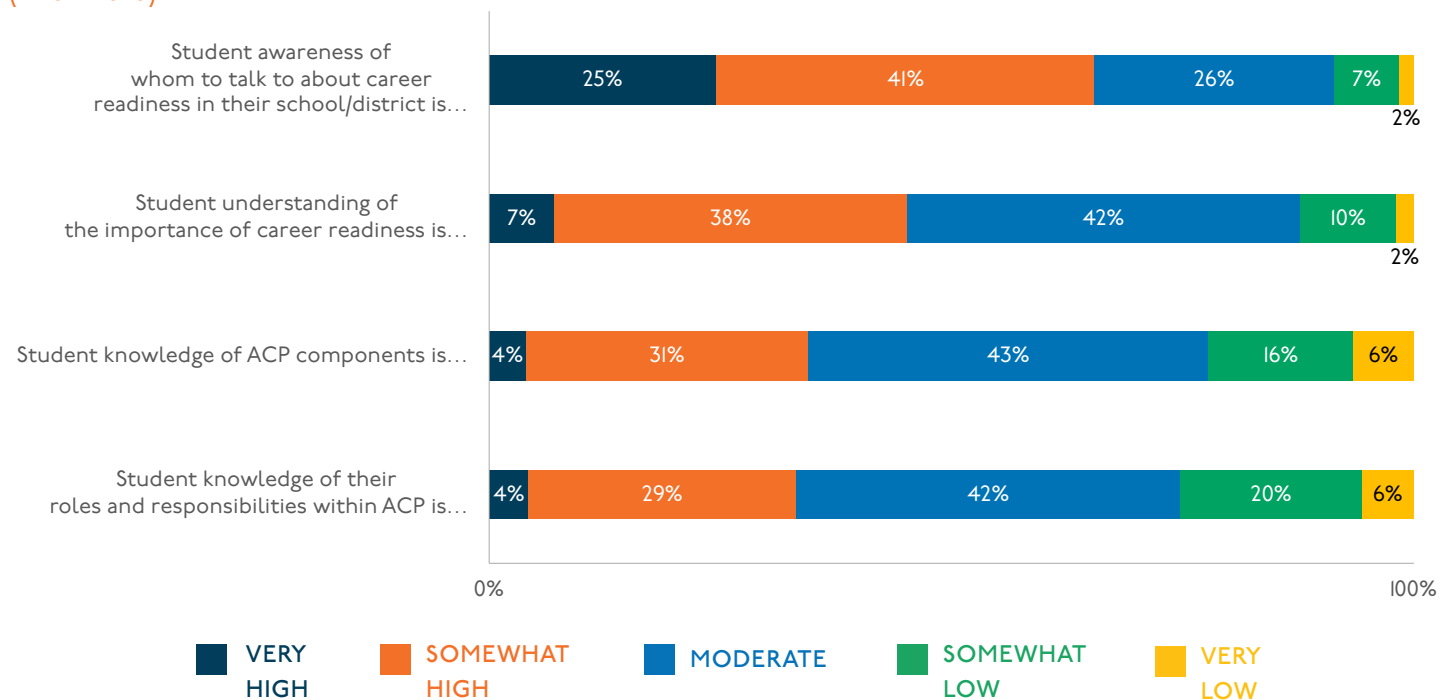
Section 5

Equitable Practices

Equitable Practices

Another area of interest on the survey was the extent of equitable ACP practices. As schools look to provide ACP activities to all of their students, a strong practice to ensure equitable access is reviewing their own data on student participation in activities such as work-based learning, industry credentials, AP/IB, dual enrollment, and career pathways. As these activities typically take place in high school, the following results on reviewing data only apply for schools with any of the grades 9-12. As seen in Figure 14, nearly all schools responded that at least some staff review data on student ACP participation. Common roles included school counselors, school leaders, ACP coordinators, career and technical education (CTE) teachers, and central office or district leaders.

**Figure 14: Staff that Review Data on Student ACP Participation**
(N=225)
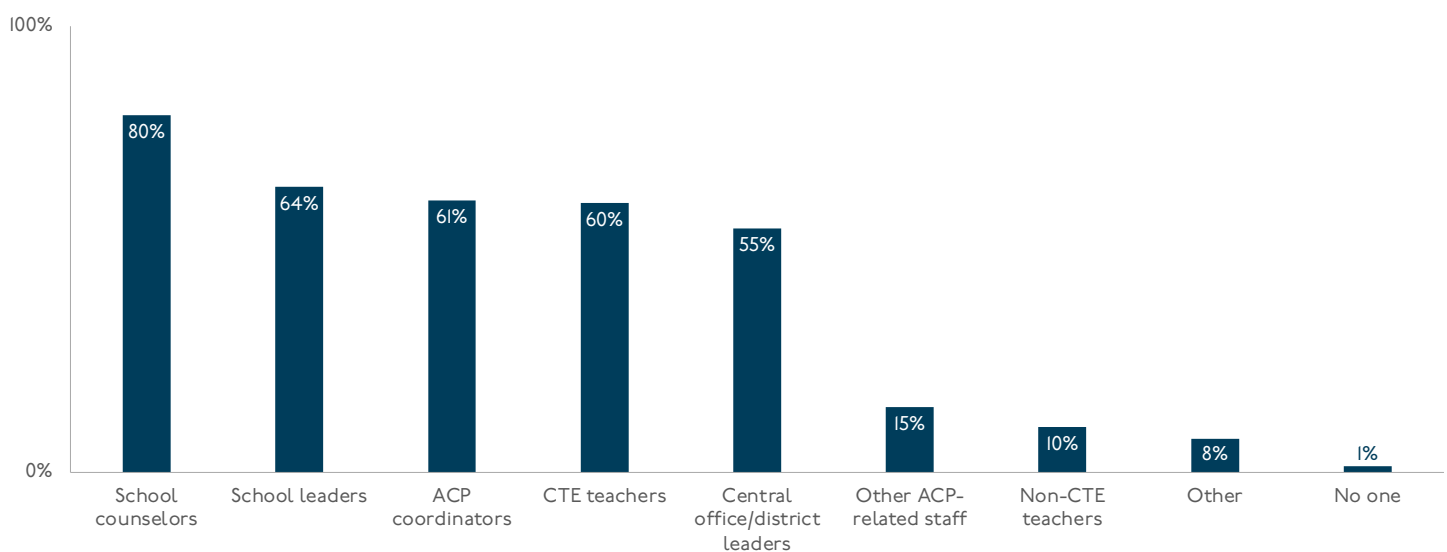
Responses to open-ended questions provided additional insight into disaggregated data review practices. Of respondents who indicated that "other" staff reviewed data, 16 listed roles, which included CTE coordinators, College and Career Readiness staff, technical college and CESA partner staff, data specialists, and office staff.

Of the 135 schools serving high school grades reporting that staff performed data reviews of student participation in ACP, 60 percent reported they disaggregated or reviewed data by student subgroups. This practice allows schools to then identify whether certain subgroups are not participating in ACP activities at the same rates as other subgroups, a possible indication of inequitable ACP delivery. Figure 15 shows which subgroups the schools that reported disaggregating their data reviews examined. As seen, the subgroups of students most frequently disaggregated were by gender, disability status, and race/ethnicity. Fewer schools, but still over half, reported disaggregating by socio-economic status or English learner status.

Figure 15: Subgroups Examined in Data Reviews

(N=77)
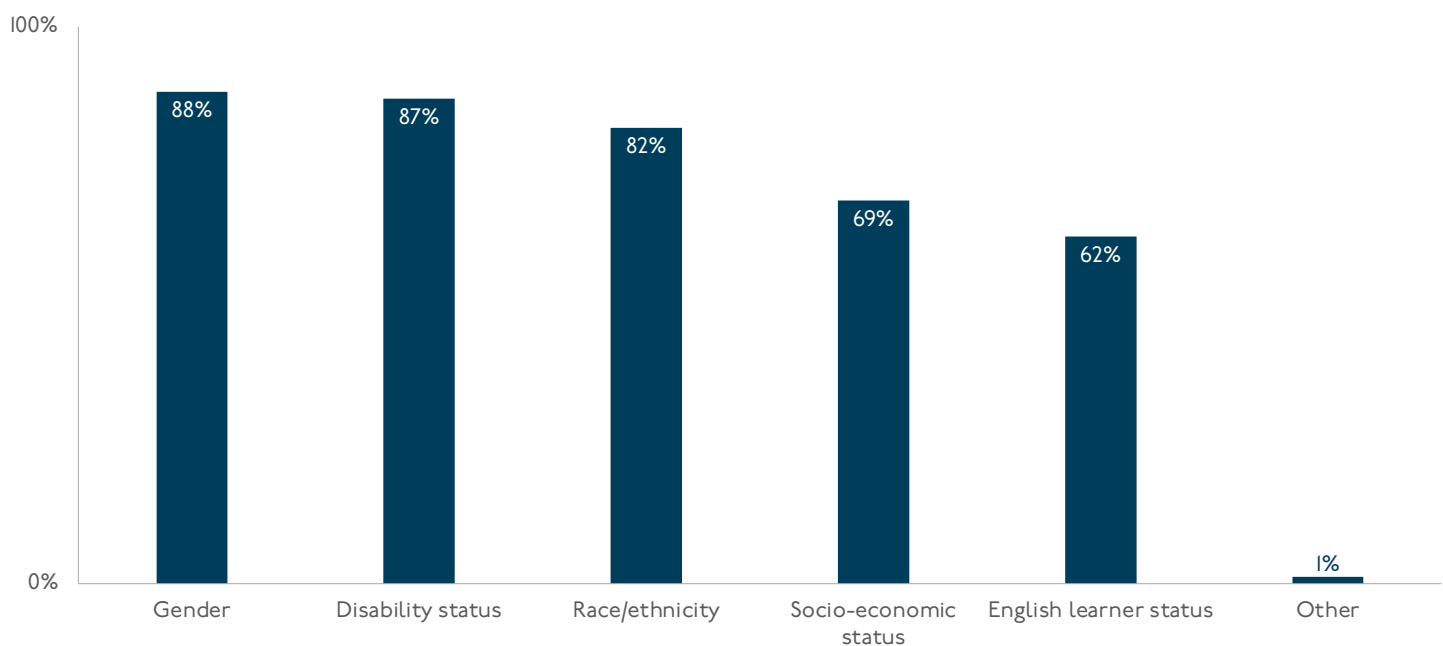
When asked what their school/district had observed in their data reviews, 46 respondents supplied answers. Thirty respondents noted that they identified participation gaps of some kind, including by student subgroups:

- Students with disabilities (n=11)

- Race/ethnicity (n=7)

- Gender (n=6)

- Socio-economic status (n=4)

- English learner status (n=3)

- No gaps identified (n=5)

Some respondents reported summaries or specifics of their findings, or strategies undertaken to address gaps:

"We see perpetual gaps in our most marginalized students taking advantage of ACP opportunities."

"White students are more likely to participate in Youth Apprenticeship. AVID students and affluent students are most likely to have a post-secondary plan in place. Students with disabilities often use work-based learning for credit towards graduation."

"We have a large percentage of students with a learning disability in CTE."

"Students with disabilities are underrepresented in AP/dual enrollment class opportunities. White students and non-economically disadvantaged students are overrepresented in AP/dual enrollment classes."

"Low participation of women in non-traditional careers. Low participation of minority groups as CTE concentrators (2 or more of same CTE area courses)."

"We had a low number of females taking Tech Ed classes, so we marketed the courses as transcripted to gain interest."

The survey also asked respondents who reported doing data reviews what they have done as a result of their data analysis. There were 47 responses to this item, which specified new programming and strategies; working with teachers to build awareness of gaps and programming; targeted outreach and support; providing financial support for courses, certifications, and CTSOs (Career and Technical Student Organizations); and implementing goal-setting and continuous improvement processes. Specific strategies included:

"Implementing some new programs primarily based around relationship building and mentor opportunities."

"We have implemented daily advisory as a structure that can help us move forward in supporting all students with ACP."

"We have examined the course selection process and have encouraged all students to choose AP/dual enrollment classes. We don't limit access by GPA or other academic factors."

"We have found and created new ways to collect data so we know what to look for. It has allowed us to truly evaluate our programs and have accountability."

"We have implemented targeted support groups and worked towards co-teaching in our lower areas."

"We have worked hard to present the opportunities to earn IRCs [Industry Recognized Credentials] and participate in the YA [Youth Apprenticeship] program to all students. We now have a more balanced group of participants that better reflects the makeup of our school's demographic population."

"Targeted outreach. Framing of ACP as anti-racist."

Four respondents noted that despite doing disaggregated data review and identifying gaps, no actions were taken to address inequities.

Section 6

Communication and Engagement

Communication and Engagement

Another vital component of ACP examined by the survey was communication and engagement practices. The following figures show the methods utilized by schools to build awareness about activities such as work-based learning, industry recognized credentials, AP/IB, dual enrollment, and Career Pathways with a variety of stakeholders including students (Figure 16), teachers and staff (Figure 17), family and community members (Figure 18), and local employers and the business community (Figure 19). Across stakeholders, frequently used methods of communication included emails and school or district websites. Specific to students, many schools reported using counselor meetings. Additionally, schools frequently used staff meetings for building awareness among teachers and staff.

Other communication and engagement strategies reported with students (n=39) included:

- Social media
- Conferences
- Presentations and events
- Partners
- Student videos

Figure 16: Methods of Communication Used to Build Student Awareness of ACP Activities
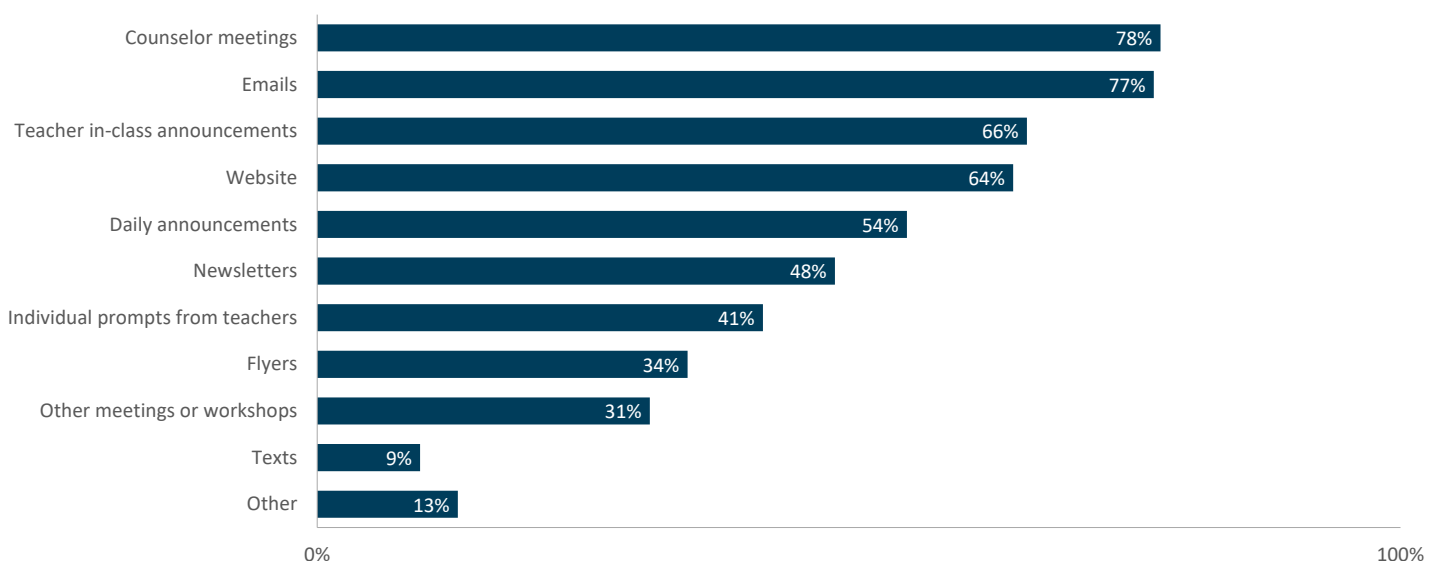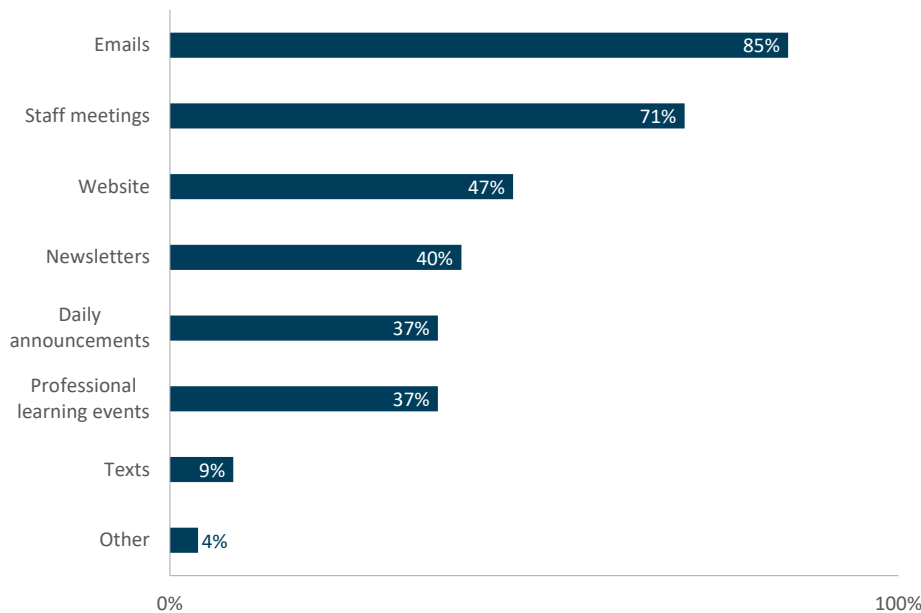(N=316)

Method	Percentage
Counselor meetings	78%
Emails	77%
Teacher in-class announcements	66%
Website	64%
Daily announcements	54%
Newsletters	48%
Individual prompts from teachers	41%
Flyers	34%
Other meetings or workshops	31%
Texts	9%
Other	13%

Figure 17: Methods of Communication Used to Build Teacher and Staff Awareness of ACP Activities

(N=310)

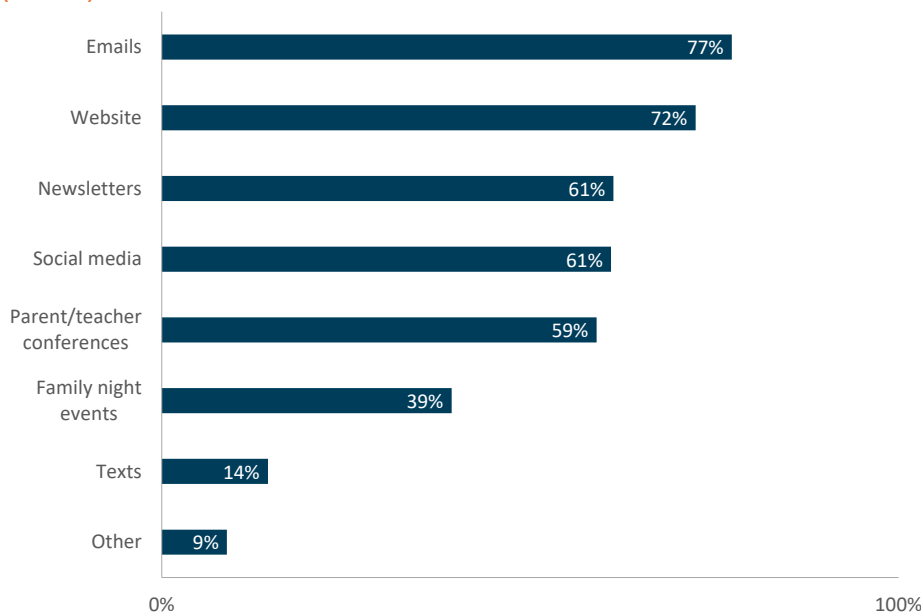| Method	Percentage
Emails	85%
Staff meetings	71%
Website	47%
Newsletters	40%
Daily announcements	37%
Professional learning events	37%
Texts	9%
Other	4%

Other communication and engagement strategies reported with teacher and staff (n=12) included:

- Word of mouth; personal discussions
- Course scheduling-related information

Figure 18: Methods of Communication Used to Build Family and Community Member Awareness of ACP Activities

(N=305)

| Method	Percentage
Emails	77%
Website	72%
Newsletters	61%
Social media	61%
Parent/teacher conferences	59%
Family night events	39%
Texts	14%
Other	9%

Other communication and engagement strategies reported with families and community members (n=26) included:

- Course scheduling events, information
- Course catalog, course guide
- College fairs
- Dual credit nights
- Annual information sessions
- Registration
- Remind app

Figure 19: Methods of Communication Used to Build Local Employer and Business Community Awareness of ACP Activities

(N=288)
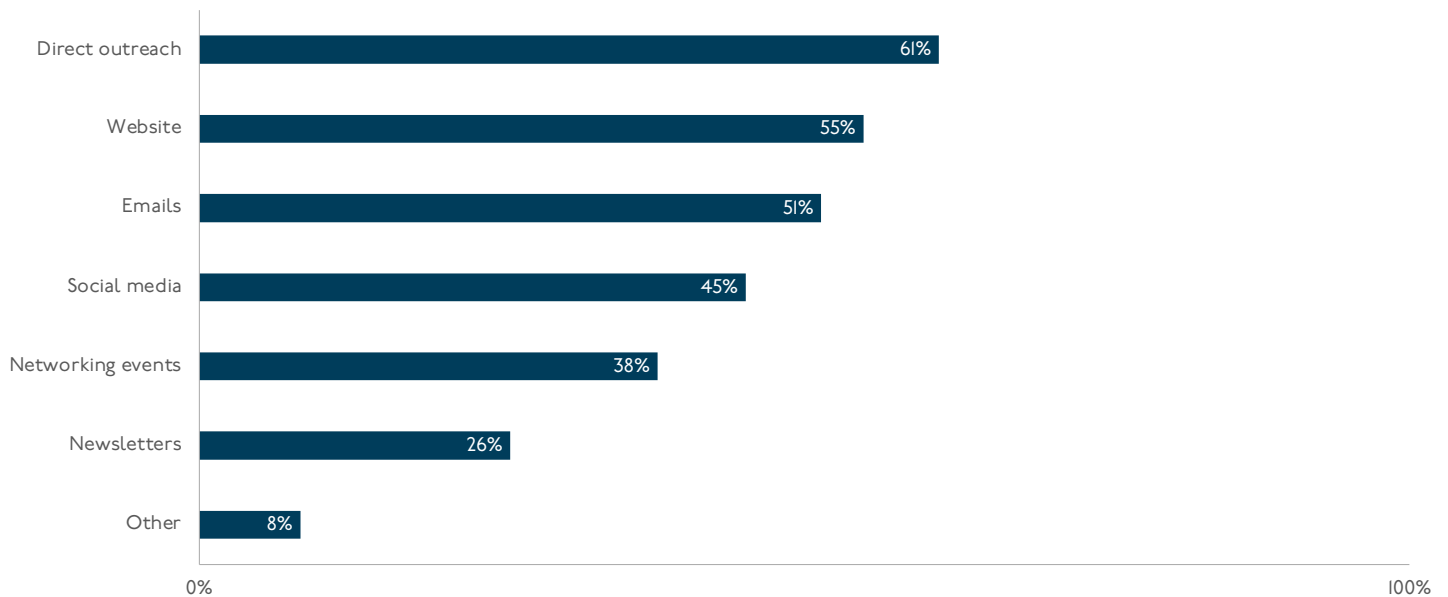
Other communication and engagement strategies reported with local employers and the business community (n=24) included:

- Chamber of Commerce
- CESA YA Consortium
- INSPIRE Wisconsin
- Dedicated meetings with the business community
- Advisory Committee
- LinkedIn

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked about the most effective method of addressing communication barriers with families and community members. Of the 182 responses to this item, the majority (167) only addressed communication with families. The most effective methods identified were:

- One-on-one conferences or communications (n=52)
- Social media (n=35)
- Email (n=32)
- Phone calls (n=19)
- Newsletters (n=17)

Nine respondents noted the importance of providing communications in multiple languages, three reported surveying families to identify the most effective and appropriate means for communication, and 25 noted that they were unsure of how to address communication barriers.

For the few that addressed communications with community members, the most common strategy reported was direct and targeted communication. Respondents also mentioned the need for improved use of social media.

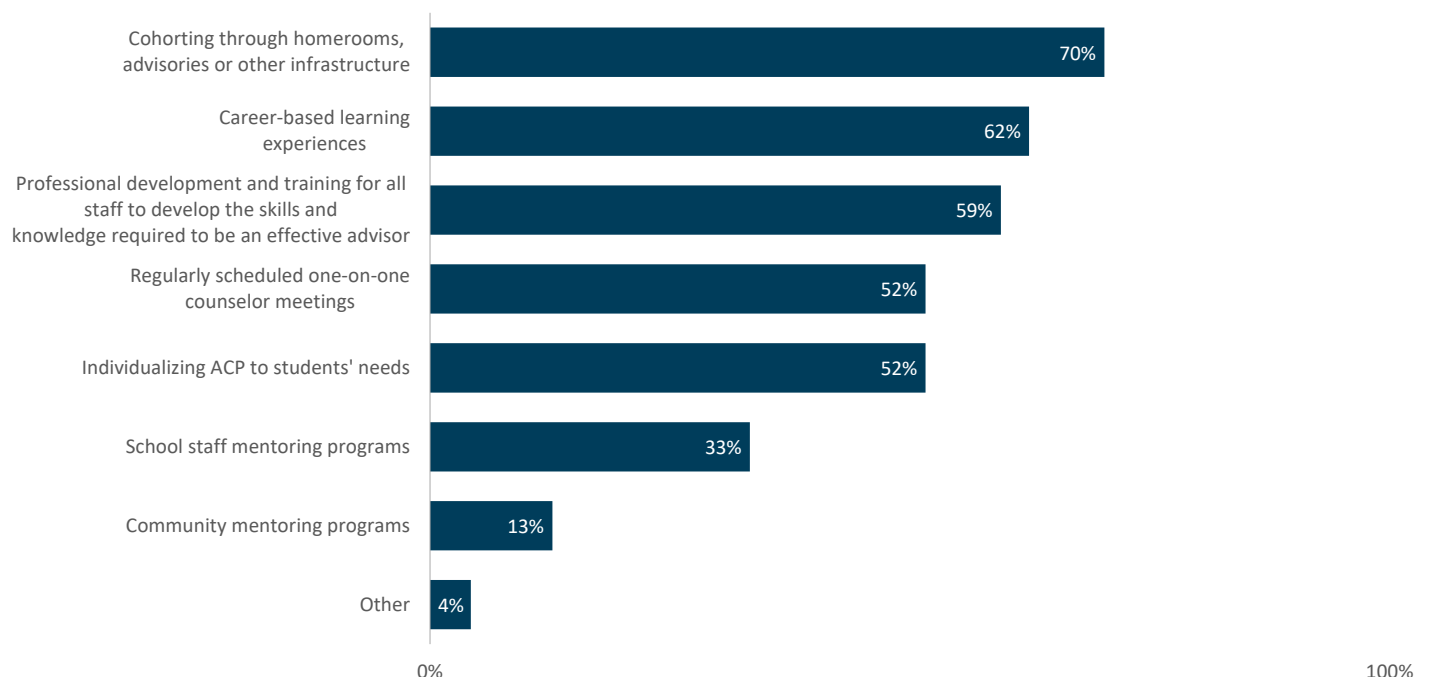Section 7

Relationship Building

Relationship Building

A final area examined by the statewide survey of schools was the support of safe, trusting, and supportive student-adult relationships, a powerful ACP practice schools can use to connect to students and increase their participation in the ACP process. As seen in Figure 20, schools reported a variety of methods they used to build or maintain these relationships. The most commonly reported methods included cohorting students, providing career-based learning experiences, and providing professional development to staff on advising. Schools wanting to improve safe, trusting, and supportive student-adult relationships may want to consider the extent to which they utilize these methods.

"Other" methods for supporting the building of safe, supportive relationships (n=13) included courses created to support ACP, social-emotional learning lessons in homerooms, the Sources of Strength program, transition plans, and a "students first" approach. Several respondents reported that their schools needed work in this area, or that they had no strategies.

Figure 20: Methods for Building/Maintaining Safe, Trusting, Supportive Student-Adult Relationships

(N=306)

Cohorting through homerooms, advisories or other infrastructure	70%
Career-based learning experiences	62%
Professional development and training for all staff to develop the skills and knowledge required to be an effective advisor	59%
Regularly scheduled one-on-one counselor meetings	52%
Individualizing ACP to students' needs	52%
School staff mentoring programs	33%
Community mentoring programs	13%
Other	4%

0%   100%

Summary

Summary

This report has identified both successes in ACP implementation across the state as well as some areas for improvement. Key successes included:

- Strong provision of regular, ongoing, supportive, and safe student relationships with adults through cohorting, career-based learning experiences, and professional development.

- High reported levels of implementation of informing about or encouraging students to participate in a variety of key ACP activities including dual credit, AP and/or IB, work-based learning, Career Pathways, and industry recognized credentials. Data show an increase in these practices, particularly for Career Pathways.

- Schools implementing the use of comprehensive student ACP plans with a variety of key components, including plans for high school courses, the identification and self-assessment of career skills, and career areas of interest.

- Schools employing a variety of methods to communicate with all key stakeholders about ACP. Specifically for communication with families, a majority of schools reported using one-on-one conferences or social media to address communication barriers.

Several of the areas for improvement described in the findings have been identified in past surveys, although in some cases, schools are improving gradually. Practices, policies, and infrastructure that need support and/or other means for improvement include strategies for better communicating with and engaging families and the community; supports for building and maintaining safe, supportive student relationships with adults; and a more pervasive culture of disaggregated data review along with strategies for addressing participation gaps. Because they are so important for a successful ACP program, safe and supportive relationships are both an area of success and of needed improvement. A number of specific findings with low levels of implementation are related to student and teacher/staff buy-in and engagement around ACP. The specific indicators identified in the report showing comparatively low levels of implementation are the following:

- Providing professional development to ALL staff around ACP

- Staff knowledge of how to support ACP

- Staff knowledge of their roles and responsibilities around ACP

- Staff knowledge of district plans for ACP implementation

- Student knowledge of the importance of career readiness

- Student knowledge of ACP components

- Student knowledge of their roles and responsibilities around ACP

Considered as a whole, this set of findings indicates that there may be many districts where staff and students do not see ACP as a cohesive approach, but rather misinterpret ACP as a set of discrete activities. Confirming these findings is the discrepancy found between reported levels of implementation of having an inclusive ACP culture and levels of implementation related to key factors necessary for that culture to thrive. Such a view greatly limits the effectiveness of ACP efforts. These districts would benefit from taking their ACP implementation to the "next level;" in other words, reviewing, updating, and articulating a robust, comprehensive, student-focused program of ACP/career readiness that focuses on equitable outcomes and all-staff involvement. The hallmarks of a robust, cohesive program for ACP/career readiness include:

- Well-articulated goals and measurable indicators of success to track progress;

- Space, time, and other resources needed to implement the program;

- Sufficient and on-going professional development for all staff;

- A comprehensive stakeholder communication and engagement plan that allows for bi-directional exchanges of information (students, staff, families, local business and community members);

- Regular review of disaggregated data with results shared with stakeholders;

- Accountability measures (credits and/or graduation requirements as well as means for staff accountability); and

- A focus on safe and supportive relationship-building between staff and students that enables ongoing individualized, one-on-one conversations about students' interests, goals, and plans for the future.

To truly attain an all-school/all-district culture of ACP, not only do all staff need to be well aware of the program, its rationale, its goals, and its components, but they also must be involved in and held responsible for its implementation on a daily basis. Taking ACP to the level of best practice amounts to a philosophical approach to schooling underpinned by the preparation of each and every student for their future.

While DPI already has numerous resources to address these very needs, it should continue its outreach and support to schools looking to make improvements in the areas identified in the survey data.