Advancing Academic and Career Plans

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC AND CAREER PLAN SUBGROUP OF THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON COLLEGE AND WORKFORCE READINESS

SEPTEMBER 2012

CHARGE

The Governor's Council on College and Workforce Readiness has expressed interest in advancing Academic and Career Plans (ACPs) for all Wisconsin students. The Council convened a subgroup of interested committee members and their representatives charged with further examining this issue and developing specific recommendations for the full Council's consideration. This paper outlines the findings and recommendations of the ACP subgroup.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY

Over the past several years, Wisconsin and states across the country have been advancing major educational investments focused on the dual goal of improving students' college and career readiness. For example, Wisconsin has adopted rigorous new, internationally benchmarked, academic standards and has begun building new student assessments to measure how well students are mastering these standards. The state is developing new PK-20 longitudinal student data systems that will provide students, parents, educators, and policy makers with better information to improve student learning. Further, the state is working to create a new school accountability system that will more explicitly focus on college and career readiness.

In this era of increased expectations for what students need to know and be able to do to succeed in postsecondary education and a career after high school graduation, students require personalized learning opportunities that are matched to the realities of the workforce they will enter. Research substantiates the need for additional investment in workforce development strategies at the high school level that will help students successfully transition to college and careers. According to one recent study, more than half of high school students studied "could not describe the nature of the career or educational pathways needed to pursue their career interests."[1] Further, the need for more rigorous and career-relevant coursework is apparent when, across the nation, 42 percent of community college freshmen and 20 percent of freshmen in four-year institutions enroll in at least one remedial course.[2]

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[1] "Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans: A "How To Guide" Focused on the High School Years", Wills et al, March 2012. http://www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/ACP-How-to-Guide-Final032012.pdf

[2] NCES

What is an Academic and Career Plan (ACP)?

To meet these challenges, a majority of states have now implemented (through state law or administrative policy) requirements for explicit individual student academic and career plans as a way to support students in their efforts to be both college and career ready.   Academic and Career Plans (ACPs), also known as individual learning plans or individual graduation plans, are student-driven planning and monitoring tools that help students create programs of study that are aligned with high school graduation requirements, personal interests, and individually-defined career goals. An ACP can refer to both a process that helps students engage in career development activities and a product (document/portfolio) that is created and maintained for the student's academic, career, and personal advancement. ACPs are developed collaboratively by students, parents, and school staff, including teachers and counselors, and are dynamic documents that are updated as students' personal, educational and career goals change.

As has been previously shared with the Council, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has been exploring implementation of a high quality ACP through reviews of research and best practice in Wisconsin and around the country.   As part of that review, DPI recommends advancing local plans and exploring a state model ACP that incorporates at least the following components:

1. **Individual goal-setting.** As part of the ACP, students set short-term and long-term personal, educational, and career goals.

2. **Self awareness and exploration activities**. These include assessment instruments and self-reflection activities combined with guided, critical analysis that allow students to identify their personal interests, skills, and values and how these connect to their future plans and decisions.

3. **Career awareness, assessment and exploration activities**. This work connects the results of the student's self-exploration activities and personal goals with investigation of career clusters, career pathways, and individual occupations that match the student's interests, skills, and values. This includes examination of:
   - What are the skills necessary for the occupations?
   - What kind of educational preparation is necessary, including required high school courses and postsecondary education or training?
   - What is the earning potential in the occupations?
   - What does the current and projected labor market information show for the particular occupations?

4. **Academic and career planning and management.** Once goals have been set and career paths identified, a student's ACP guides his or her college and career ready preparation and decisions.   The ACP should:
   - **Explicitly connect a student's middle and high school coursework with the education and preparation needed to successfully enter a particular field of interest.** The ACP should include that sequence of courses that satisfies both middle

school promotion and high school graduation requirements while preparing the student for his or her next steps (college entrance , the military, job training, or direct workforce entry). Career and technical education (CTE), dual enrollment, and early college programs can play critical roles in expanding access for more students and should be emphasized.

- **Include work-based learning opportunities.** The ACP should incorporate multiple opportunities for the student to experience actual worksites and connect with people employed in their fields of interest. This can range from guest speakers to job shadows to paid work experiences.
- **Connect the student with relevant extra-curricular and community-based learning experiences.** The ACP should incorporate community-based learning as well as other extra-curricular activities that provide experience with and exposure to the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary for future success.
- **Identify the postsecondary training options available to enter a particular field of interest and create a financial plan to cover costs.**   The ACP process should help a student determine which postsecondary training options offer the best fit for short and long-term goals, what those options cost, and what funding options are available to cover those costs (family financial planning, scholarship opportunities and requirements, loan options and requirements).

What does the research say about ACPs?

While state ACP initiatives are still relatively new and research on their academic impact is limited, emerging research supports the use of ACPs to make schools more personalized and improve various student outcomes. For example, one study indicated strong support for ACPs from parents, teachers, and students, and suggested that "students who become more competent in self-exploration, career exploration and career planning and management are more motivated to attend school, become confident learners, actively set goals, and record better grades."[3]

Another research review[4] prepared for policymakers in Massachusetts considering ACPs found the following:
- Learning plans improve student motivation and engagement.
- Learning plans improve students' understanding of postsecondary options and long-term planning.
- Learning plans improve school-family communication and foster family involvement in academic and career planning.
- Learning plans increase student awareness of their individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Learning plans aid students in selecting courses relevant to their career goals.

During its July 24, 2012 meeting, the ACP Subgroup heard a presentation from Joan Wills, Senior Policy Fellow at the Institute for Educational Leadership, about her national research on

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[3] "Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans: A "How To Guide" Focused on the High School Years", Wills et al, March 2012. http://www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/ACP-How-to-Guide-Final032012.pdf
[4] Student Learning Plans: Supporting Every Student's Transition to College and Career", Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, June 2011. http://renniecenter.issuelab.org/research/listing/student_learning_plans_supporting_every_students_transition_to_college_and_career.

individual learning plans as well as best practices and examples of statewide implementation in other states.   A number of her findings were drawn from a nearly completed 5 year study that focused on 5 states and 14 schools. Among her key points were the following[5]:

- **States are leading the way in promoting ACPs.**   Six years ago, 22 states required them through law or regulation. In 2012, 35 states have mandated or are piloting them. Among the reasons for this increase are evidence that ACPs help reduce the number of dropouts while engaging students at risk, providing better links to rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students, and establishing better connections amongst parents, students, and schools.
- There is also evidence that suggests exposure to career opportunities has value as young as 4th grade, while substantive research indicates that **formal planning should start for all students in the middle school years.**
- Though the "ideal" frequency that students should review their plans has not been determined, once a year is not sufficient. **States should not promote the concept of an ACP if it simply becomes a rigid checklist that must be completed once a year**. If approached as merely another task, it has no relevance for the students and parents.
- **It is critical to recognize ACP development as a *process*.** Promising practices emerging from research that are part of this process include:
  - Dedicating time to conduct ACP work as often as two-three times a week, often during an advisory period. "Youth do better when they have the opportunity to develop confidence to develop their own goals in order to become self-reliant and capable of managing their own life choices."[6]
  - Providing students the opportunity to connect with a mentor/advisor throughout their high school years to support their ACP goals. Evidence supports the need to create ongoing connections with the same adult in a small setting.
  - Alignment to state-established career clusters helps students, staff, and schools to provide focus.
  - Developing opportunities for **student-led** parent/teacher conferences is an effective tool for a successful ACP.
- All school staff, businesses, postsecondary institutions, community organizations, and parents need to be involved in the delivery of the plan, and states and school districts need to think about the roles, functions, and how to engage each of these groups effectively.
- Researchers have developed a "How To" Guide[7] to help support ACP "curriculum" for school staff and to address ideas for engagement of key groups.   This "How To" Guide is currently in a vetting stage, but could be shared with school districts as a best practices guide to establishing an effective ACP process.
- **While all school staff need to be engaged and supportive, a key leadership group should be established in each school and district to develop the plans and monitor progress.** Though school counselors will often be part of this group and may be tasked to lead the group, the administration should provide sufficient evidence of support and involvement to ensure effective implementation.

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[5] Connecting College and Career Ready Strategies", Joan Wills, presentation to the Governor's Council on College and Workforce Readiness ACP subgroup, July 24, 2012.

[6] "Connecting College and Career Ready Strategies", Joan Wills, presentation to the Governor's Council on College and Workforce Readiness ACP subgroup, July 24, 2012.

[7] "Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans: A "How To Guide" Focused on the High School Years", Wills et al, March 2012. http://www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/ACP-How-to-Guide-Final032012.pdf

- There are a range of options for state action and implementation of ACPs. States must determine the scope of ACP implementation (i.e. all students will do them or some subset of the population), and when they should start (i.e. middle school, high school). Most states have required all students to participate with a start in middle school and continuing through all four years of high school.
- There may be advantages to a "soft mandate", as evidence points to "acceptance and even embracement by districts and schools" who are already doing many of the activities that are formalized in an ACP.
- Most states have conducted a pilot phase of at least a year in selected districts, with professional development first provided to pilot schools and then to all districts and schools. State agencies collaborate to build user-friendly systems that include career information, interest assessment tools, etc.
- Local, non-mandatory options do exist, but research is not complete on how well these voluntary/incentive-based options work and what the best incentives are to promote them.
- District and school-level officials in the states she studied were very supportive of the academic and career plans, and were not concerned about a mandate, which Joan found surprising. However, she emphasized that any statewide implementation should be phased in over time, and not done overnight, to be successful. The concept of a pilot phase was emphasized so that schools and districts could determine what worked best without being constrained by a state policy that was too rigid.
- States and districts have done this without a lot of new money, but the areas where money was spent were professional development and high quality electronic ACP software that is linked to labor market data and student information systems.

How are states implementing and funding ACPs?

While the concept of personalized learning is not new, state legislatures are increasingly looking to ACPs as a strategy to strengthen high school graduation requirements and align those requirements to new college and career ready standards and assessments. These state laws range from very general requirements that a student develop an ACP to very specific grade-by-grade expectations for students that are outlined in statute. Among those states that have not yet formally adopted ACPs in law, investments in ACPs are being made at the local level. A DPI review of other state ACP laws is attached for review.

States have approached funding and supporting these requirements in different ways. For example, South Carolina fully funds an online career information system and 5 state level FTEs to support the system along with providing funds to districts to support the hiring of career specialists in most middle and high schools. New Mexico, on the other hand, provides no state funding to support the mandate, but uses federal Perkins funding to conduct initial training based on the state template.[8]

Joan Wills recommended to the subgroup that, while ACPs can be relatively cost effective, there are costs associated with professional development and electronic portfolio development and

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[8] "Personalized Learning: Policy Insights from Four States", National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, April 2011. www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/policy-brief-03.pdf

support.   In particular, Joan stated that it is clear from her research that ACPS are "overwhelmingly easier to promote and monitor if the state provides the core funding and infrastructure to allow students and parents access to online electronic ILPs and career information systems."[9]

Representatives from two Wisconsin school districts also encouraged the subgroup to recognize that, while professional development and support for software implementation may be relatively low cost, resources are still needed to support students in pursuing their career goals (i.e. dual enrollment options, internships, school-to-work opportunities, etc.)

How are Wisconsin school districts currently implementing ACPs?

ACPs are not currently required under Wisconsin law.   However, the state supports their use in a variety of ways.   ACPs are a core component of Wisconsin's Comprehensive School Counseling Model.   Moreover, Wisconsin requires districts receiving Carl Perkins career and technical education funding to develop Programs of Study, which become the foundation for a student's individual learning plan[10]. DPI and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) developed resource guides and other supports for school districts to model how PK-12 teams and post-secondary educational leaders and employers can collaborate to facilitate effective PK-12 preparation and subsequent transition into post-secondary coursework and careers.

Currently, many Wisconsin schools in the state are already utilizing ACPs as part of their comprehensive school counseling programs and Programs of Study. Exemplar schools include L.B. Clarke Middle School (Two Rivers), Edison Middle School (Green Bay), Lombardi Middle School (Green Bay), Preble High School (Green Bay), Sheboygan Sough High School (Sheboygan), and Whitewater High School (Whitewater).

The subgroup heard presentations from two Wisconsin school districts that are exemplars in implementing ACPs.   Lori Peacock, the Career/Technical Education and Counseling Coordinator for the Green Bay Area Public School District and Steve Schneider, School Counselor from Sheboygan South High School, explained how those districts are approaching this work and how the school and district community is supporting these individualized plans.

While the two districts differed in their approaches to implementation, there were some similarities, including:
- Both districts had a strong, key lead role for school counselors. However, they did note the student to counselor ratios vary from district to district, which could impact implementation. If a state requirement/mandate was going to be advanced, one suggestion was to also set a state student to counselor ratio. The American School Counselor Association recommends a counselor to student ratio of 1:250.

[9] Connecting College and Career Ready Strategies", Joan Wills, presentation to the Governor's Council on College and Workforce Readiness ACP subgroup, July 24, 2012.

[10] A Program of Study is a specific career pathway, defined by a local school/district partnership, which is a sequence of instruction based on recommended standards and knowledge and skills, consisting of coursework, co-curricular activities, worksite learning, service learning and other learning experiences including Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO). The sequence of instruction provides preparation for a career. POS are for all students PK through 16 and beyond.

- While the counselors played a key leadership role, it was noted that an area for future growth was improving the buy-in and support from content area teachers; it was noted that content area teachers may not always have the knowledge of how the content applies in specific business/industry contexts.
- Both introduced career exploration in the early grades, but introduced formal e-portfolios in middle school.
- Both districts used parent/student/counselor conferences as a critical formal time to review and update their plans.
- Both noted the importance of linking their plan with their district student information system.
- Both emphasized how they use their systems to link with parents (i.e. through a parent portal), and mentioned innovative ways they were using the information gathered to reach out to local businesses.
- Both districts emphasized heavily the importance of community, business, and higher education support in order to provide resources to the student.   In particular, they noted that a district can have the best academic and career plan, but without resources and opportunities for students to engage in the path they are choosing (internships, dual enrollment courses, job shadowing, etc.), the plan is just a plan.

Many other schools and districts are offering high quality ACPs in some capacity. The subgroup heard from the Wisconsin Technical College System about the WICareerPathways.org website, and from the UW-Madison about their tool, WISCareers.   Both tools offer students access to information about career pathways, labor market data, and more. Information presented by the WTCS and UW-Madison suggested many Wisconsin school districts are utilizing one or both products in some capacity, while still other districts use third party vendors to provide ACP software to their students.

What current Wisconsin laws address or relate to ACPs?

While state law does not specifically require the use of ACPs, Wisconsin state law and administrative code require school districts to establish an education for employment program, a requirement which specifically overlaps with the goals of an ACP in a variety of ways.

Chapter 121.02 of the Wisconsin State Statutes establishes Wisconsin's school district standards, which are required to be implemented by all school boards in Wisconsin.   In particular, standard §121.02(m) requires each Wisconsin school board to do the following:

> *§121.02(1)(m).   Provide access to an education for employment program approved by the state superintendent.   Beginning in the 1997-98 school year, the program shall incorporate applied curricula; guidance and counseling services…; technical preparation…; college preparation; youth apprenticeship…or other job training and work experience, and instruction in skills relating to employment."*

Wisconsin administrative code, Chapter PI 26, provides the regulatory framework for this statutory requirement. In particular, Chapter PI 26.03(3) and PI 8.01(2)(L)5 and (m)specifically overlaps with the goals of an ACP.

PI 26.03(3.) The program shall provide to all pupils in grades kindergarten through 12 access to an education for employment program which provides for foundations of good citizenship and which links academic and occupational standards to workplace skills and experiences. The program shall provide information to pupils at various grade levels as follows:

(a) Career awareness at the elementary grade levels.

(b) Career exploration at the middle grade levels. Career exploration shall address stereotyping and may include work-based learning experiences and career research identifying personal preferences in relation to future work roles.

(c) Career planning and preparation at the high school levels, including all of the following:

1. Career research identifying personal preferences in relation to specific occupations and school supervised work based learning experiences.

2. Instruction in career decision making and employability skills, including work behaviors.

3. Instruction which provides for the practical application of academic skills and applied technologies.

4. The study of the practical application of economics and American economic institutions, including entrepreneurship education.

5. Pupil access to technical education programs which have a curriculum incorporating accurate national, regional and state labor market information, including labor market supply and demand.

PI 8.01(2)(L) Instruction. Each school district board shall provide instruction as follows:

5. An introduction to career exploration and planning, through a one semester course or the equivalent in instructional time and course content, shall be integrated within grades 5 through 8.

PI 8.01(2)(m) Education for employment. Each school district board shall comply with s. 121.02 (1) (m), Stats., and ch. PI 26, relating to education for employment.

While school districts have considerable latitude in how they meet the education for employment program requirements, it could be argued that the state could do more to provide high quality model ACPs and additional support and resources for districts to implement the current law requirements in a more impactful way. Moving forward, for example, opportunities exist for the state DPI to develop a state model ACP process and school district guidance document, to provide more support and training to school districts around ACPs, and to strengthen strategic partnerships between institutions currently providing tools for career exploration and ACP planning. Further, the ongoing development of the Statewide Student Information System (SSIS) has the potential to provide another tool for making ACPs meaningful for students, efficient for schools, and accessible for parents.

The ACP Subgroup makes the following recommendations to the Governor's Council on College and Workforce Readiness:

Who should have an ACP?
The subgroup recommends that all Wisconsin students have an ACP.

When should the formal ACP process begin?
The subgroup recommends that the formal ACP process begin in 6th grade, and exposure to career opportunities and interest surveys occur in elementary school.

How often should an ACP formally be updated?
The subgroup recommends that, at a minimum, ACPs <u>must</u> be updated through formal, ideally student-led, conferencing with parents/guardians and school staff once a year. Districts should require parents/guardians to attend. However, when possible, ACPs <u>should</u> be updated through formal, ideally student-led, conferencing with parents and school staff twice a year.

In addition to formal conferencing, the subgroup recommends that all students <u>must</u> have an opportunity to review and update their ACPs informally on a more frequent basis, such as once a week, through district developed protocols (i.e. in career courses, homeroom periods, core content classes, etc.).

Who should lead the ACP process in a school/district?
The subgroup recommends the establishment of school and district leadership teams to help support effective ACPs. The subgroup recommends that school counselors play an integral role in the leadership team while other school staff (subject area teachers, homeroom advisors, coaches, etc.) should be engaged to support the student.

In addition, the subgroup finds that the role of a supportive adult mentor is critical for ACP success and recommends that all students should have an advisor/mentor who can support them and their ACP throughout their high school years. Thus, the subgroup further recommends that any state policy or guidance needs to reflect sufficient flexibility to the school district to ensure that student and school needs are met in implementing this recommendation.

How should school staff be engaged in the school's ACP process?
The subgroup finds that engagement of all school staff is essential for successful student ACPs. The subgroup recommends that DPI, in partnership with Wisconsin educators, develop and provide guidance to school districts specifically addressing best practices from around Wisconsin and the country regarding engagement of all school staff. The subgroup recommends that specific district-led professional development be undertaken to ensure that all school staff are involved, supported, and positively engaged in a school's ACP process.

How should parents/guardians be engaged in a school's ACP process?
The subgroup finds that the involvement of a student's parent, guardian, or other significant adult is a core component of a successful student ACP. The subgroup recommends that the school and

district leadership teams proactively consider the best means and methods for contacting parents to share critical information about student academic and career goals. The subgroup recommends DPI, in partnership with Wisconsin parents and educators, provide guidance to school districts addressing best practices from around Wisconsin and the country regarding optimal parental participation.

How should local business and industry be engaged in the ACP process?
The subgroup finds that involvement of local business and industry is essential for successful student academic and career planning.

At the school and district level, the subgroup recommends that school and district leadership teams work in concert with local business and industry and local chambers of commerce in the school district to proactively consider the best means and methods for involving local business and industry in a district's academic and career planning work.

At the regional level, the subgroup recommends that Economic Development Regions proactively collaborate with regional school districts, CESAs, and higher education to provide links to business and industry opportunities (apprenticeships, dual enrollment, school-to-work opportunities, job shadowing, school visits, teacher visits, etc.).

At the state level, the subgroup recommends that business and industry engagement in statewide K-12 academic and career planning should be a standing item for the Governor's Council on College and Workforce Readiness and the Council on Workforce Investment.

The subgroup recommends that DPI, in partnership with Wisconsin educators, representatives of higher education (the Wisconsin Technical College System, the University of Wisconsin System, and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities), the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and others, provide guidance to school districts addressing best practices from around Wisconsin and the country regarding business and industry engagement; and that DWD, as part of this partnership, provides guidance to workforce development boards and economic development regions addressing best practices from around Wisconsin and the country on optimizing business engagement with local school districts.

How should the community at large be engaged in the process?

The subgroup finds that community involvement and support of ACPs is a critical component for success.

The subgroup recommends school and district leadership teams proactively consider the best means and methods for involving community members and organizations. For example, in the case of students with disabilities, vocational rehabilitation counselors, outside therapists and other support professionals can be of great value in academic and career planning.

The subgroup recommend that DPI, in partnership with Wisconsin educators, higher education [WTCS, UW System, and WAICU], DWD, the Department of Health Services (DHS) and

others, provide guidance to school districts addressing best practices from around Wisconsin and the country regarding community engagement in academic and career planning.

How should electronic ACP software be incorporated?

The subgroup recommends that an online software component is a necessary feature of a Wisconsin model ACP.

The subgroup does not endorse any product, but instead recommends specific content and accessibility features be included in any state-required or state-supported ACP. These features include the following:

Content Features:

Personal Portfolio
- Student's personal profile page
- Portfolio of meaningful work and experiences
- Interest inventories and records
- Self-reflection tools and records
- Space for ongoing personal, academic, and career goal-setting and revisions
- Space to store and maintain career and academic files, such as
  - Transcripts
  - Awards and certificates
  - Portfolios of work (papers, art projects, multimedia artifacts, etc.)
  - State and local assessment results (i.e. WKCE, MAP, etc.)
  - College and Career Readiness assessment results (ACT Suite [ACT, EXPLORE, PLAN, and Workkeys], SAT, Compass, Accuplacer, ASVAB, state or local work readiness assessments, etc.)
  - Letters of recommendation
  - Resumes
- Storage space for relevant personal files, such as:
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Volunteer activities

Education plan
- High school graduation plan
- Program of Study aligned to goals (i.e. incorporation of Career Clusters and Career Pathways)
- Access to specific high school course information for developing schedule based on student's plan

- Ability to incorporate strategies to improve performance when assessments (such as EXPLORE, PLAN) indicate students need additional assistance in particular subject areas.
- Information about available dual enrollment opportunities (i.e. transcripted credit, advanced standing, UW System and private college options, Youth Option opportunities)
- Advanced Placement assessment results, CLEP assessment results, Project Lead the Way/STEM, and International Baccalaureate programs with built-in credit calculator function, as well as information on the higher education credit available by WI institution
- Searchable database of apprenticeship, internship, job shadowing, school-to-work, and Youth Apprenticeship opportunities
- Industry/technical certifications available
- Specific information about Wisconsin colleges and universities (admission requirements, etc.) to promote Wisconsin higher education

Career/ Post-Secondary plan
- Career aptitude assessments
- Career cluster information linked to aptitude assessments
- Career interests and goals
- Database for matching career goals with college programs or training opportunities
- Resume building application
- Storage space for cover letters
- Postsecondary education admission requirements (public/private colleges, universities, technical colleges, trade schools, etc.)
- Postsecondary education application forms
- Financial aid and scholarship information
- FAFSA form
- Up-to-date labor market information, including:
    - Regularly updated information from DWD about in-demand jobs on a regional, state, and national basis
    - Searchable database of employment opportunities
- University or technical college graduation plan, including:
    - Major and course of study
    - Apprenticeship plan and schedule
    - Budget builder/loan calculator program
- Higher education portal
- Employer/Military portal
- Specific information about Wisconsin careers, businesses, quality of life, etc. to promote Wisconsin

Accessibility

- A web based program that should be integrated to the greatest extent possible with DPI's statewide student information system and associated data tools
- Capacity to serve all students in the state
- Support for students with disabilities, including compatibility with student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and students served through Section 504 Plans, and accessible for students with disabilties
- English as a second language support
- Age appropriate and user friendly
- Ability to transfer with a student when changing schools or districts
- Ability to integrate with DWD labor market information and associated software
- Ability to integrate with higher education data
- Information security and compliance with state and federal student data privacy laws
- Online technical assistance
- Parent portal with email notifications (i.e. application deadlines, college/industry visits, etc.)
- School counselor/teacher/advisor portal with email notifications
- Developed in concert with students to maximize student engagement
- Consideration given to how private or home-schooled students might be able to access the software, if desired

How should the state advance implementation of ACPs statewide?

The subgroup recommends that the legislature consider adoption of a new law requiring all students to develop an ACP.   As part of this recommendation, existing state law (*§121.02(1)(m)*) and rule (*PI 26.03(3)*) pertaining to education for employment plans should be reviewed to determine what statutory changes are necessary to advance ACPs for all students.

The subgroup recommends that this requirement be phased in over five years.   This will allow school districts time to successfully implement ACPs, and should coincide to the greatest extent possible with DPI's rollout of a statewide student information system.

The subgroup recommends that the legislature make funding available in the 2013-15 biennial budget for the DPI to provide free ACP software to all Wisconsin school districts and students, in line with the subgroup's earlier recommendations about ACP software.

The subgroup recommends that the legislature make funding available in the 2013-15 biennial budget for professional development for district and school staff for both training on the ACP software and on the ACP process points discussed in earlier recommendations.

To support effective implementation of ACPs, the subgroup recommends that a comprehensive analysis be conducted to determine what resources currently exist in school districts to

implement these requirements and what additional resources may be necessary for all districts to successfully implement these recommendations. In particular, the subgroup noted the wide variation from school district to school district in student to counselor ratios and the potential issues that could create in districts with higher student to counselor ratios, and recommends that this analysis address current school counselor roles and responsibilities, whether and to what extent additional counselors or other school staff may be needed to effectively implement these recommendations, and any costs associated with these recommendations.

Finally, as noted in earlier recommendations, the subgroup recommends that DPI, in partnership with Wisconsin teachers, higher education [WTCS, UW System, and WAICU], DWD, DHS, the Governor's office, and other partners develop guidance for Wisconsin school districts that incorporate the subgroup's recommendations as well as other areas of research and best practice. As part of this effort:

➢ The DPI would develop guidance to school districts on how to establish a high quality process, including best practice and guidelines for engagement and participation of students, counselors, school and district staff, parents, higher education, community resources, and business and industry.

➢ State agencies responsible for administering funding around career readiness, such as Title I, IDEA, Carl Perkins, Workforce Investment Act Title I Youth Programs, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation VR programs, etc. would work to align federal programs supporting students and career readiness around the ACP process. As part of this effort, federal funding could be prioritized for education and training on implementation of high quality ACPs.

➢ The ongoing development of the statewide student information system and other P-20/workforce longitudinal data efforts should be proactively addressed in this collaborative planning.

➢ The guidance should address the needs of special populations, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.