

# Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool



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# Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool

## OVERVIEW

Career advising is mandated by [Ohio Law](#) and is a comprehensive process that spans the educational system. It involves helping students discover their interests and explore academic and career options through classroom instruction, career-related learning experiences, and consistent counseling from K-12.

Effective career advising plans enhance the student experience by offering accessible and engaging career exploration and planning journeys. Through hands-on learning, personalized advising, and mentorship, students gain the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed for informed future decisions.

This ***Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool*** was developed as an adaptation of the work of [Westat](#) and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce in 2021. Westat is a research company who focuses on improving outcomes in health, education, social policy, and transportation. In coordination with Westat, local districts from around Ohio, including Akron City, Chillicothe City, Fairfield City and Hilliard City, contributed to the development process of the original *Gap Analysis Tool* through focus groups and prototyping. Feedback from these districts helped refine the tool and make it accessible to all districts and schools throughout Ohio.

This gap analysis tool helps districts evaluate their educational climate and career advising practices, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. It aims to enhance student experiences and support various post-secondary pathways.

This gap analysis highlights 3 components:

- **Family & Community Engagement**
- **Student-Centered Learning**
- **Student Access**

In the tool, each component is addressed in one section. Each section begins with a concept framing statement to explain its purpose. Each section also includes a table that lists indicators that capture practices that reflect effective and successful implementation of a comprehensive approach to advance high-quality career advising practices.

## DIRECTIONS FOR USE:

The Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool is designed to be completed by a stakeholder group that works through each component together to determine the degree to which the school or district has successfully addressed it. There are multiple options for completing the tool. Individuals can score each indicator on their own and then convene as a stakeholder group to compare findings, or the stakeholder group can convene and score the indicators together.

Completing the tool requires teams to gather evidence to determine the extent and quality of implementation. There is a list of possible evidence provided in each section for each component. The list is not all-encompassing and can vary based on the local context and availability of data.

As a team works through each indicator, they should determine the degree to which the school or district has engaged in successfully implementing career advising practices. There are five levels to indicate the quality of implementation:

**Best practice** *BP* means there is significant evidence of successful implementation in this aspect of the work.

**Good practice** *GP* means there is some evidence of successful implementation in this aspect of the work.

**Developing practice** *DP* means there is little to no evidence of successful implementation (or in early implementation phase) in this aspect of the work.

**Not in Practice** *NIP* means nothing has been considered, developed, or implemented in this aspect of the work.

**Unaware** *U* means there is no knowledge of this aspect of the work.

For the best results, teams should complete the entire gap analysis. However, it is possible to focus in more depth on individual components that are of greater significance based on the local context and needs.

The tool can be completed on a paper version and manually scored or using the linked Excel-based spreadsheets that score automatically.

- [Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool Spreadsheet \(Update Coming Soon\)](#)
- [Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool Administrator Spreadsheet \(Update Coming Soon\)](#)

## RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STEPS TO COMPLETE THE ANALYSIS TOOL:

1. Designate one team member as the administrator for the gap analysis.

2. Distribute the gap analysis to all members of the team and other leadership as appropriate.
3. Determine if the team will complete it individually or as a group.
4. Team members complete and return results to the administrator, which can be done on a hard copy or using the [Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool Spreadsheet \(Update Coming Soon\)](#)
5. Administrator compiles gap analysis results using the [Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool Administrator Spreadsheet \(Update Coming Soon\)](#).

## **USING THE RESULTS:**

Once the Career Advising Gap Analysis Tool has been completed and the results have been compiled, team members can identify areas of success and determine opportunities for continuous improvement. Upon reflection, the team will utilize the structure of the Career Advising Toolkit and Plan Template to develop strategies and action steps to support the sustainability of career advising successes and address the gaps to inform the implementation of data-driven, student-centered career advising plans within their district and schools.

# Component One: Family Engagement

Each child receives tailored support to be successful through meaningful partnerships built on trust between educators, family and the community.

The bulleted list provides examples of recommended evidence to use when responding to the indicators for Family and Community Engagement. The list is not all-encompassing, and users are encouraged to gather the most appropriate evidence for their context.

- District/school mission and vision
- School improvement plan
- Family engagement plan
- Decision framework
- Meeting agendas, schedules, sign-in sheets, etc.
- Parent and family survey results
- Student survey results

- Focus group findings
- PowerPoint presentations
- Program evaluation results/findings
- Communications
- Parent, family and school compact
- Family engagement policy
- Budget (federal and general funds)

## Career Advising Specific Resources

- District Career Advising Policy
- Business Advisory Council Plan
- Information on local student success and graduation plan elements
- Any additional local or district level information in support of career advising and graduation planning

Using evidence, select the level that best represents the school or district's implementation of each indicator: **Best Practice (BP)**, **Good Practice (GP)**, **Developing Practice (DP)**, **Not in Practice (NP)**, or **Unaware (U)**.

Our School or District...	Evidence of Implementation	BP	GP	DP	NP	U
1. reflects family and community engagement in a school/district <b>plan or policy</b> (e.g., mission, vision, strategic plan).						
2. builds <b>capacity of all staff to implement</b> the family and community engagement plan or policy.						
3. builds <b>capacity of families</b> to support child's academic and career pathway journey.						
4. implements the family and community engagement plan or policy through a <b>collaborative team approach</b> .						
5. engages students and families in <b>various settings</b> throughout the community (e.g., students' homes,						



community events, local recreational centers, after-school community programs).						
6. communicates career exploration and planning options to family and community members through <b>effective modes</b> in home languages (e.g., E-newsletters, email blasts, dedicated webpages, presentations, meetings, home visits).						
7. takes a <b>tailored approach</b> to address the needs of students and families (e.g., wraparound services, adult learning opportunities).						
8. implements a variety of <b>proven strategies</b> to increase family participation in a student's academic and career pathway journey, including graduation and career planning (e.g., provide childcare, flexible scheduling).						
9. conducts <b>family surveys or focus groups</b> .						
10. uses results from family surveys or focus groups to <b>inform decision making around career-connected learning and family engagement</b> .						
11. includes family groups that represent the community served on teacher or school leader <b>interview teams</b> .						
12. includes family groups that represent the community served and community stakeholders on <b>planning, steering, and/or advisory groups</b> .						
13. conducts <b>community surveys or focus groups</b>						
14. uses results of community surveys or focus groups to <b>inform decision making around career connected learning and community engagement</b> .						
15. leverages <b>community resources</b> to help address student and family career pathway awareness and exploration.						
16. <b>reflects upon and revises</b> , as needed, the family and community engagement strategies and policies.						

17. conducts a thorough review of the current <b>use of funds</b> to determine how to best support career-connected family and community engagement.						
18. <b>partners</b> with local businesses, foundations, or non-profits to fund career-connected family and community engagement efforts.						
19. demonstrates a commitment to <b>fiscal transparency</b> in career-connected family and community engagement work.						

## Component Two: Student-Centered Learning

Each child has access to teachers who adapt their instruction based on students' interests, strengths and needs, allowing students to take greater ownership of their learning.

The bullet list provides examples of recommended evidence to use when responding to the indicators for student-centered learning. The list is not all-encompassing, and users are encouraged to gather the most appropriate evidence for their context.

- District/school mission and vision
- Strategic plan
- Student achievement and progress
- Induction plan, frameworks, and materials
- Professional development plans
- Lesson plans
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Written Education Plans (WEPs)
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Teacher observations
- School improvement plan

- Student and staff demographic information
- Career technical education (enrollment data)
- Decision framework
- Meeting agendas, schedules, sign-in sheets, etc.
- Parent/family survey results
- Student survey results
- Staff survey results
- Focus group findings
- PowerPoint presentations
- Communications

### Career Advising Specific Resources

- District Career Advising Policy
- Business Advisory Council Plan
- Information on local student success and graduation plan elements
- Any additional local or district level information in support of career advising and graduation planning



- Continuous improvement plan
- School counselor evaluation

**Using evidence, select the level that best represents the school or district's implementation of each indicator: Best Practice (BP), Good Practice (GP), Developing Practice (DP), Not in Practice (NP), or Unaware (U).**

Our School or District...	Evidence of Implementation	BP	GP	DP	NP	U
1. reflects a commitment to student-centered career-connected learning in a school/district <b>plan or policy</b> (e.g., mission, vision, strategic plan).						
2. provides <b>training and support</b> to the entire school community to develop student-centered career-connected learning practices.						
<b>3. implements</b> student-centered career-connected instructional programming in all classrooms.						
<b>4. observes staff</b> to determine if they are engaging in student-centered career-connected learning.						
5. acquires <b>student input to inform and revise</b> the implementation of student-centered career-connected instructional approaches (e.g., surveys, focus groups, informal feedback).						
<b>6. collaborative teams</b> (e.g., school counselor, teacher, career-tech educators, student, family members) help to develop and support each student's graduation and career plan.						
7. conducts a thorough review of current <b>use of funds</b> to determine how to best support student-centered career-connected learning.						
8. demonstrates a commitment to <b>fiscal transparency</b> in student-centered career-connected learning efforts.						

## Component Three: Student Access

Each child receives a well-rounded education that prepares them to be successful beyond K-12 schooling because barriers to access and participation were removed.

The bulleted list provides examples of recommended evidence to use when responding to the indicators for Student Access and Opportunities. The list is not all-encompassing, and users are encouraged to gather the most appropriate evidence for their context.

- District/school mission and vision
- Course enrollment, completion, and achievement data
- Master schedule
- Extracurricular enrollment
- Strategic plan
- School readiness
- Student achievement and progress
- Induction plan, frameworks, and materials
- Professional development plans
- Dual enrollment
- College enrollment
- Remediation rates (K-16)
- Lesson plans
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Written Education Plans (WEPs)
- Response to Intervention (RTI)

- Teacher observations
- School improvement plan
- School counselor evaluation
- Family engagement plan
- Student demographics information for course enrollment
- Career technical education (enrollment data)
- Decision framework
- Meeting agendas, schedules, sign-in sheets, etc.
- Parent/family survey results
- Student survey results
- Staff survey results
- Focus group findings
- PowerPoint presentations
- Communications

### Career Advising Specific Resources

- District Career Advising Policy
- Business Advisory Council Plan
- Information on local student success and graduation plan elements
- Any additional local or district level information in support of career advising and graduation planning

Using evidence, select the level that best represents the school or district's implementation of each indicator: Best Practice (BP), Good Practice (GP), Developing Practice (DP), Not in Practice (NP), or Unaware (U).

Our School or District...	Evidence of Implementation	BP	GP	DP	NP	U
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1. reflects a commitment to student access to career exploration in a school/district <b>plan or policy</b> (e.g., mission, vision, strategic plan).						
2. conducts a review of the policies, processes, and requirements to <b>identify barriers</b> for student participation in various career-based experiences (e.g., career connections course, career awareness activities, job shadowing, mentorship, project-based experiences, work-based learning, simulated work experiences, pre-apprenticeship).						
3. <b>refines</b> policies, processes, and requirements for student participation in various career-based experiences (e.g., career connections course, career awareness activities, job shadowing, mentorship, project-based experiences, work-based learning, simulated work experiences, pre-apprenticeship).						
4. <b>supports families</b> in deciding the best opportunities for students' academic and career programming to meet their individual needs.						
5. ensures that each student has <b>fair access to technology</b> that supports his/her career awareness, exploration, and planning.						
6. <b>uses data</b> to support quality of programming and participation.						
7. <b>reviews data</b> to examine potential partiality in special education placement and/or grade level retention.						
8. implements a student success plan to provide <b>supports for students identified at-risk of dropping out and retained students.</b>						
9. establishes a process that engages students, families, and appropriate school staff to determine and identify (as needed) <b>early intervention services and supports to include in student success plans.</b>						
10. conducts a thorough review of the school curricula with teacher, student, and family advisory committees to						

ensure the curricula <b>reflect each student's unique learning needs and clear touchpoints to careers.</b>						
12. conducts a thorough review of current <b>use of funds</b> to determine how to best support student access.						
14. establishes an <b>ongoing partnership</b> with neighboring districts and regional entities to support student access initiatives (e.g. distance learning, tri-county course offerings through local community college partnerships).						
15. <b>partners</b> with local businesses, foundations, or non-profits to fund student access initiatives (e.g. sponsoring evening programs to help parents/families complete applications, donating musical instruments).						
16. demonstrates a commitment <b>to fiscal transparency</b> in student access efforts.						
17. determines the <b>appropriate allocations</b> to support the differentiated needs in each school building to ensure student success.						