

The Promise of Building a Pathways System

American communities are challenged by young adults who are not fully prepared for the demands of postsecondary education and training, skilled employment, and civic participation. As a result, individuals, families, educators, employers, and the community experience unemployment and underemployment, skill gaps in the workforce, slow economic growth, poor student achievement, low college completion rates, and a diminishing middle class.

There is good news. Across the country, schools are engaging students in pathways that clearly connect learning to career themes and offer real-world work experiences within the community. This approach fills a critical gap that much education reform ignores – the need to spark individual motivations and aspirations. As students regain this, they experience higher rates of academic success and transition more effectively into high-demand careers. Thus, as a result of career pathways, individual and community prospects brighten significantly:

Students engage in courses and activities that connect directly to their future, gaining highly relevant academic, employability, and career skills needed for success in postsecondary education and the workplace. These experiences enable students to make more informed decisions.

Parents and guardians gain greater awareness of ways in which they can assist their children in making successful transitions into responsible and productive adults.

Postsecondary and training educators enroll students who have stronger academic and technical skills along with a clearer understanding of career demands and expectations. They see an increase in retention and graduation.

Employers (private, non-profit, and government sectors) have access to a highly qualified, well-prepared workforce that is ready to contribute to company growth and effectiveness.

Community and elected leaders realize the many benefits of having higher rates of skilled employment and individuals earning family sustaining incomes.

Educators gain insight into and understanding of the workforce; they hone instructional practices that engage students and connects rigorous curriculum and activities to postsecondary and career expectations.

School counselors and advisors increase collaboration with postsecondary institutions and the workforce to ensure that their guidance is current and on-point.

School leaders realize improved graduation rates, an increase in postsecondary enrollment, an energized school culture, and staff members who work together rather than in isolation.

Every learner with a dream and a plan
Every community with a capable, ready workforce



NC3T has developed the Pathways System Framework™ that supports the effective development and implementation of sustainable career and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) pathway programs of study. The Pathways System Framework™ builds upon current education reforms including standards aligned curriculum and assessments, literacy and technology across the curriculum, and use of research-proven instructional practices such as project based learning.

NC3T recommends that a local Pathways Partnership, comprised of multiple stakeholders, is convened to oversee the Pathways System planning and implementation. Offering technical support, expert coaching, and proven resources leading to the development of a Pathways System Implementation Plan, NC3T helps keep Pathways Partnerships on track and making progress.

The framework focuses on five broad areas, all working together to develop learners who are College, Career and Life Ready:

Cross-Sector Partnerships, creating sustained collaboration among multiple stakeholders who work together to build a local pathways system

Career Exploration and Planning opportunities, helping learners make informed choices about careers and related education and training

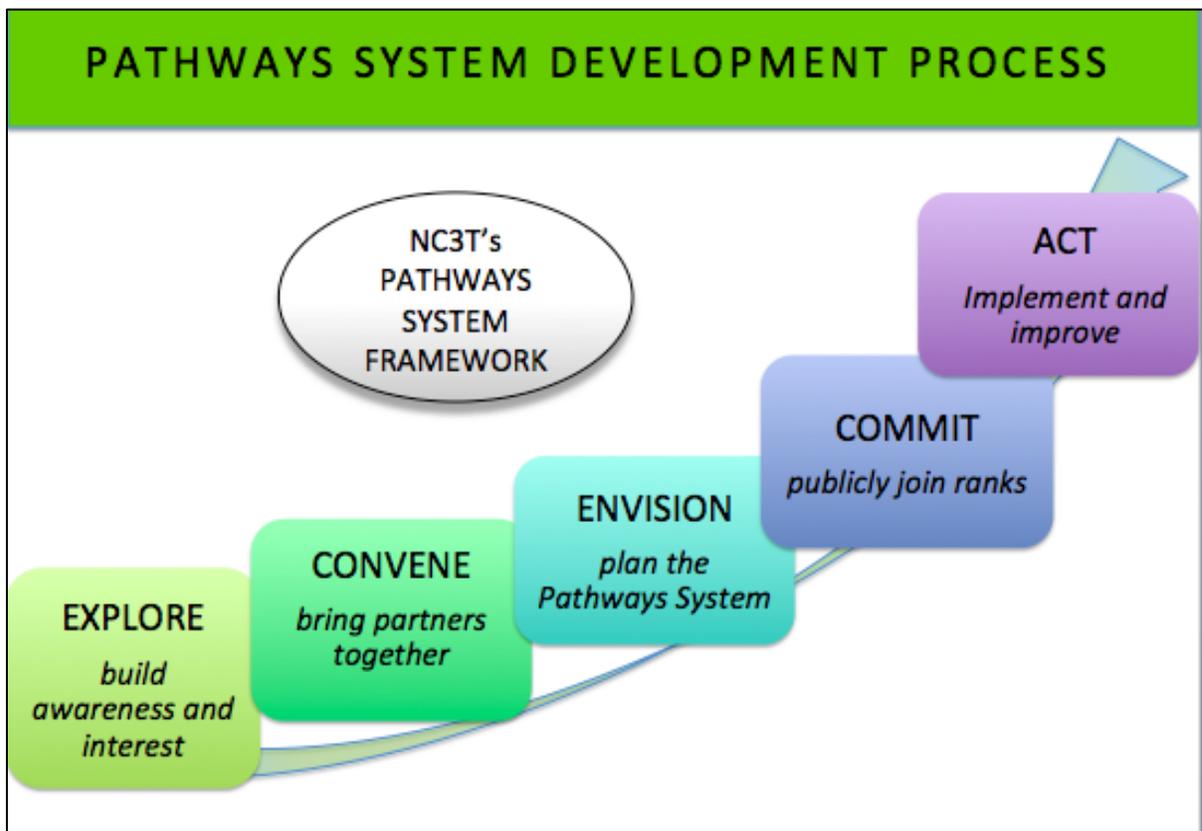


Pathway Programs of Study at the secondary and postsecondary levels, aligned with student interests and workforce demands

Dynamic Teaching and Learning, engaging learners in rigorous and active learning using research-proven instructional practices

Employer and Community Engagement, helping students experience the workplace and building positive relationships with employer mentors

NC3T has developed an effective process to implement its Pathways System Framework™. With support from a NC3T Site Coach, each locally convened Pathways Partnership moves through a Pathways System Development Process resulting in a system that is unique to regional needs and is sustained through local leadership.



SAMPLE ACADEMIES AND PATHWAYS

Academy of Advanced Technologies

- Automotive & Diesel Technologies
- Communications & Info. Technology
- Construction Trades & Technologies
- Engineering & Design
- Manufacturing & Mechatronics

Academy of Health & Human Services

- Biomedical Science and Research
- Education Careers
- Early Childhood Development
- Health Careers & Health Occupations
- Social/Family/Youth Services

Academy of Arts, Communications, & Entrepreneurship

- Business, Finance & Entrepreneurship
- Digital Design and Video Production
- Hospitality/Tourism
- Performing Arts & Fine Arts Careers
- Sports & Entertainment Marketing

NC3T PATHWAYS SYSTEM SUPPORT & SERVICES

- ✓ Design Specifications and Asset Inventory
- ✓ Onsite and Virtual Coaching
- ✓ Meeting Facilitation and Planning
- ✓ Keynote Addresses
- ✓ Technical Assistance and Resources
- ✓ Customized Research and Reports

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