

## **Pathways System Cost Centers for College and Career Pathways System**

The following categories represent potential costs that schools may encounter when implementing a college and career pathways model. Some costs, professional development for example, may already be accounted for in existing budgets. Others, such as partnership coordinator, may be assumed by outside agencies (i.e., school foundation or chamber of commerce). Finally, other costs listed in this document may be avoided entirely (i.e., licenses for franchised pathways programs). In all cases, anticipated costs should be accounted for in the early stages of pathways system planning.

### **1. Pathways Coordinator**

To efficiently and effectively plan, implement, and maintain a sustainable pathways system, a coordinator should be designated and announced to all stakeholders; the coordinator typically leads a highly active and responsive pathways system team. The pathways coordinator should have decision-making authority and easy access to the school's most senior administrators and/or school board.

### **2. Partnership Coordinator**

Members of the business community, economic and workforce development agencies, and other regional organizations and foundations play an important role in pathways programs. These partners benefit from active and ongoing engagement in order to contribute to the design, implementation, and maintenance of the pathways system. While teachers and administrators may collaborate with these partners individually, a comprehensive and systematic implementation calls for a designated partnership coordinator who may be an employee of the school district, a community member, or a hired consultant.

### **3. College and Career Counseling Services**

Individual counseling, focused on helping students explore postsecondary and career options, is a critical element in the pathways model. However, in many schools there are not enough counselors<sup>1</sup> and their time is often filled with tasks other than providing career and postsecondary guidance. Schools interested in an

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<sup>1</sup> According to the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, the national ratio of high school students to counselors is 478:1; they recommend a ratio of 250:1.

effective pathways system implementation should look for ways to invest in a robust counseling function with a designated college and career counselor.

#### **4. Career Exploration Portfolio Tool**

There are a number of online resources, including those from Kuder and Career Cruising, that allow students to complete interest inventories, explore careers and postsecondary options, and compile personal portfolios. Rather than a one-time experience, these resources may be used throughout students' middle and high school years. Some states, including Pennsylvania and New York, have state-sponsored resources that schools may access at no cost.

#### **5. Work-Based Learning Coordinator**

In a comprehensive pathways system, students have the opportunity to participate in work-based learning. To ensure high-quality experiences, a coordinator should be in place to communicate with business partners, visit and review workplaces, prepare employers and students for productive experiences, and monitor students and employers over the course of the program.

#### **6. Licenses for Franchised Programs**

As pathways are developed, schools often incorporate programs from organizations such as the National Academy Foundation or Project Lead The Way. These organizations commonly charge fees including those for licensing, teacher training, and proprietary materials.

#### **7. Transportation**

Students engaged in college and career pathways benefit from visits to regional colleges and workplaces.

#### **8. Professional Development**

All staff benefits from professional development designed to support a pathways system. Topics may include team teaching, project-based learning, and engaging with business partners.<sup>2</sup>

#### **9. Learning Tours for Staff and Partners**

Visiting schools that have successfully implemented a pathways system is invaluable to those in the planning stage. Many organized events, such as the Academies of Nashville Study Tour, require transportation and registration costs.

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<sup>2</sup> For a list of recommended topics, see NC3T's *Pathways Professional Development Overview* document.

**10. Teacher Stipends**

When teachers are invited to participate in out-of-school learning or meetings, stipends may be required to cover their time and expenses.

**11. Substitute Teachers**

When classroom teachers must leave the classroom to attend pathways-related meetings or learning tours, substitute teachers may be needed.

**12. Branding and Communications**

Like businesses, schools benefit greatly from investing in a branding and communications strategy that informs all stakeholders of the pathways system purpose, benefits, and successes.

**13. Pathways System Evaluation**

Early in the planning phase, the way in which the pathways system will be evaluated and measured should be determined. Existing metrics may be in place, however, in cases where they are not, costs may be incurred for the design and monitoring of new evaluation criteria.