

# High-quality advising: Building systems for implementing individualized career plans

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest is partnering with educators in Texas to strengthen systems of support for high-quality advising and counseling so that all middle and high school students are prepared for success in college, careers, and the military.



## Individualized career plans

### What are individualized career plans?

Individualized career plans, also known as ICPs, are a formalized process whereby students aspire to future goals that align with their talent and interests. With the close support of school personnel or other individuals (including teachers, school counselors, and parents), students set learning goals and seek academic and out-of-school learning opportunities needed to pursue those goals.<sup>1</sup>

#### What role do ICPs play in preparing students for the future?



Transition into occupational pathways that lead to social mobility.



Proactively navigate learning opportunities that align with their talent, personal life, and future goals.



Develop the resilience and adaptability needed to navigate a changing and complex world of work.

#### What types of outcomes are associated with ICPs?

Higher student motivation.<sup>2,3</sup>



Higher sense of belonging and connectedness to school.<sup>2</sup>



- ICP activities can help students establish stronger relationships with educators and their peers.
- ICP activities can empower families to be engaged in planning for postsecondary career and life success.

Increased postsecondary engagement.<sup>4</sup>



Improved student performance.<sup>2</sup>



Higher future earnings.<sup>5</sup>



- Career conversations can help students gain motivation, focus their goals, and make informed study and career choices that better align to labor market needs.
- Students who had at least one meaningful conversation with a career advisor were significantly more likely to be employed and earn higher wages as adults.

## What are the components of high-quality ICP programs?



Includes a scope and sequence of grade-specific ICP activities.



Mentors and coaches supported through a professional learning community.



Conducted throughout each academic year.



Facilitated by caring and encouraging educators (ICP coaches or mentors).



Engaged families.

## How are ICPs implemented?



### Support for student self-exploration

- Advisory periods with career advising lessons and annual student-led parent-teacher conferences.
- Self-exploration activities to discover talent and skills that align with career clusters.
- Focus on ICP quality, evaluation, completion rates, and outcomes for all students.



### Support for student planning

- Plan for short- and long-term goals aligned with personal life and occupational goals.
- Plan for high school and early college courses that align with post-high school goals.
- Plan for life after high school that reflects research on occupational pathways to social mobility.



### Support for ICP coaches and mentors

- Access to professional development to support effective coaching and facilitation.
- Designation as an ICP coach or mentor.



### Support for schoolwide implementation

- An ICP professional learning community at the district or school level.
- Activities for families to become fully engaged in the ICP process.
- Caring and encouraging ICP coaches or mentors with a low mentor-to-student ratio (1:20 or less).

# The Texas Education Agency Tri-Agency Workforce Priorities partnership

REL Southwest and the Texas Education Agency formed the [Tri-Agency Workforce Priorities partnership](#), also known as the TTWP partnership, which is supporting the implementation and refinement of the Effective Advising Framework. Effective advising uses a sequence of ICP activities to facilitate academic motivation and readiness to pursue future pathways. The partnership will align college and career readiness indicators with evidence-based frameworks of readiness, provide coaching to agency staff on data collection to monitor implementation fidelity of the framework, conduct research on district use of career and academic plans with students, and create resources to support district understanding and implementation of the framework's programmatic levers.

## What do we hope to achieve?

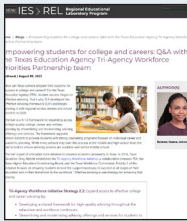
The TTWP partnership aims to increase the number and percentage of Texas high school graduates who demonstrate preparedness for college, careers, or the military, as well as the number and percentage of high school graduates who go on to be successful on their chosen path.

## Success could include the following:

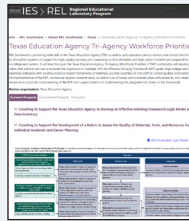
- Enrolling and persisting in college.
- Earning an industry-based credential.
- Finding work in a high-wage, in-demand occupation.
- Entering the military.



## Related resources



REL Southwest Q&A that [introduces the TTWP partnership](#).



REL Southwest TTWP partnership logic model showing [planned activities and projected outcomes](#).



REL Central infographic on [how to support students' college and career readiness and success](#).

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Policy and Program Studies Service. (2017). *Issue brief: Personalized learning plans*. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED595892>
- <sup>2</sup> Solberg, V. S. H., Wills, J., Redmond, K., & Skaf, L. (2014). *Use of individualized learning plans: A promising practice for driving college and career readiness efforts*. National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, Institute for Educational Leadership. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED588651>
- <sup>3</sup> Solberg, V. S., Howard, K., Gresham, S., & Carter, E. (2012). Quality learning experiences, self-determination, and academic success: A path analytic study among youth with disabilities. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 35(2), 85–96. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1227159>
- <sup>4</sup> Torre Gibney, T., & Rauner, M. (2021). *Education and career planning in high school: A national study of school and student characteristics and college-going behaviors* (REL 2022–127). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED615855>
- <sup>5</sup> Mann, A., Denis, V., & Percy, C. (2021). *Career ready? How schools can better prepare young people for working life in the era of COVID-19* (OECD Education Working Papers No. 241). OECD. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED613604>

This infographic is based on an [Ask An Expert presentation](#) by Dr. Scott Solberg, Professor, Boston University and Vice President, Coalition for Career Development Center.

Learn more



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