Illinois Postsecondary & Career Expectations (PaCE) Implementation Guide

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ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

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Introduction

In education, as in business, we often understand the *what* and the *how* but have only a vague understanding of the *why* in our daily practices and decisions. Every school knows that they are in business to educate students. That is a great *why*, however, it is likely not enough to provide the impetus to tackle changes in our educational framework that greatly impact students, staff, and the community as a whole. These types of identified changes impact the culture of a school and can have a profound impact on a school's focus and the opportunities it offers students. To make impactful changes that improve student learning opportunities, each district, school, and staff member must understand the *why*; and each individual should be able to develop their own *why*.

Simon Sinek, author of *Start with Why*, has a famous Ted Talk in which he discusses how great and inspiring leaders and organizations communicate using "the golden circle." At the center of the circle is the most important aspect of an organization: *the why*. The importance of identifying and clearly articulating your *why* will be discussed further in this guide.

Postsecondary and career readiness is important for each student's future. In K-12 education we have moved from a focus on graduating students, to preparing them for college, to now preparing them for postsecondary training that aligns with their identified career aspirations. This training takes many forms, each aligning to a student's identified career interests, utilizing:

• Career exploration and development;
• Postsecondary (PS) exploration, preparation and selection; and
• Financial aid and financial literacy.

The focused efforts of an organized educational team that fully understands their *why* prepares each informed student to be ready for their next step after graduation.

Several entities, including the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), have been collaborating to foster students' postsecondary and career readiness in Illinois. The primary document that has emerged from this collective work is the Illinois Postsecondary and Careers Expectations (PaCE) Framework.

The Illinois PaCE Framework was developed with extensive input gathered from stakeholders and subject matter experts to provide guidance to students, families, and educators on what types of experiences and information a student should have in order to make the most informed decision about college and career planning, beginning in 8th grade and continuing through high school. The framework is organized around the three key areas highlighted above.

The purpose of this guide is to help foster the continued implementation of the Illinois PaCE Framework, or some iteration thereof, throughout the state of Illinois. Implementing the PaCE framework or a customized version of it can greatly improve the postsecondary and career readiness of your students. This guide, along with the additional resources developed by ISAC, can assist you on this path. You have shown an interest in this work or you would not be reading this guide, so let's get started on building your game plan.

Beginning the Process

Beginning the Process

Before you begin to build your game plan, start with developing a shared understanding of your *why* and how the change process works. This section will help you to identify the *why* of your work in connection to the Illinois PaCE Framework, as well as provide some insight into the change process. Understanding the change process will be helpful in almost every aspect of this important work.

Identifying/Refining Your *Why*

As you build your game plan, you will determine the *how* and *what* of your organization's PaCE framework. But it's important to start with the *why* before you get to the *how* and *what*. As the German philosopher Frederick Nietzsche said, "He who has a why can . . . bear almost any how." The implementation of your entity's PaCE Framework will require grit and perseverance. Providing the *why* for your entity will help everyone succeed in making this cultural shift.

So, how do you identify, or further refine, your *why*? The following questions may be helpful:

• What is your educational mission statement?
• What is your educational vision statement?
• Looking at these two statements, how is postsecondary and career readiness referenced or reinforced?
• What does the quantitative data related to your students' readiness say? (Consider data from your Illinois Report Card, such as 9th grade on track, early college coursework, graduation rate, postsecondary enrollment, and community college remediation)
• Why do you feel that postsecondary and career readiness is important?
• What is your definition of postsecondary and career readiness?

Taking all these answers into consideration, what is your entity's *why*? Would your Board of Education, staff, students, community have the same *why*? If not, what is your plan to ensure everyone is rowing in the same direction?

Once you have your *why*, you are ready to move on to understanding the change process to better support the development of your game plan.

The Change Process

The Law of Diffusion of Innovation is a social science theory that was developed by E.M. Rogers in 1962. The theory attempts to explain how an idea gains momentum and spreads through a group of people over time. It categorizes people who adopt a new practice or idea into: (1) innovators (2.5% of the population), (2) early adopters (13.5% of the population), (3) early majority (34% of the population), (4) late majority (34% of the population), and (5) laggards (16% of the population). Regardless of which category you find your organization or yourself in related to the adoption of focused work on postsecondary and career readiness, the important part is that adoption occurs. But acknowledging that the individuals you are working with may each approach adoption of new ideas differently can be helpful in implementing an effective change process.

In addition to considering how different people adopt a practice or idea and how that might impact your implementation, another consideration is management of the complex change process. One helpful framework for working through the change process was developed by Lippitt and Ambrose (1987):

Managing Complex Change

(Lippitt and Ambrose)

Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Change
	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Confusion
Vision	+		+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Anxiety
Vision	+	Skills	+		+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Resistance
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+		+	Action Plan	=	Frustration
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+		=	Treadmill
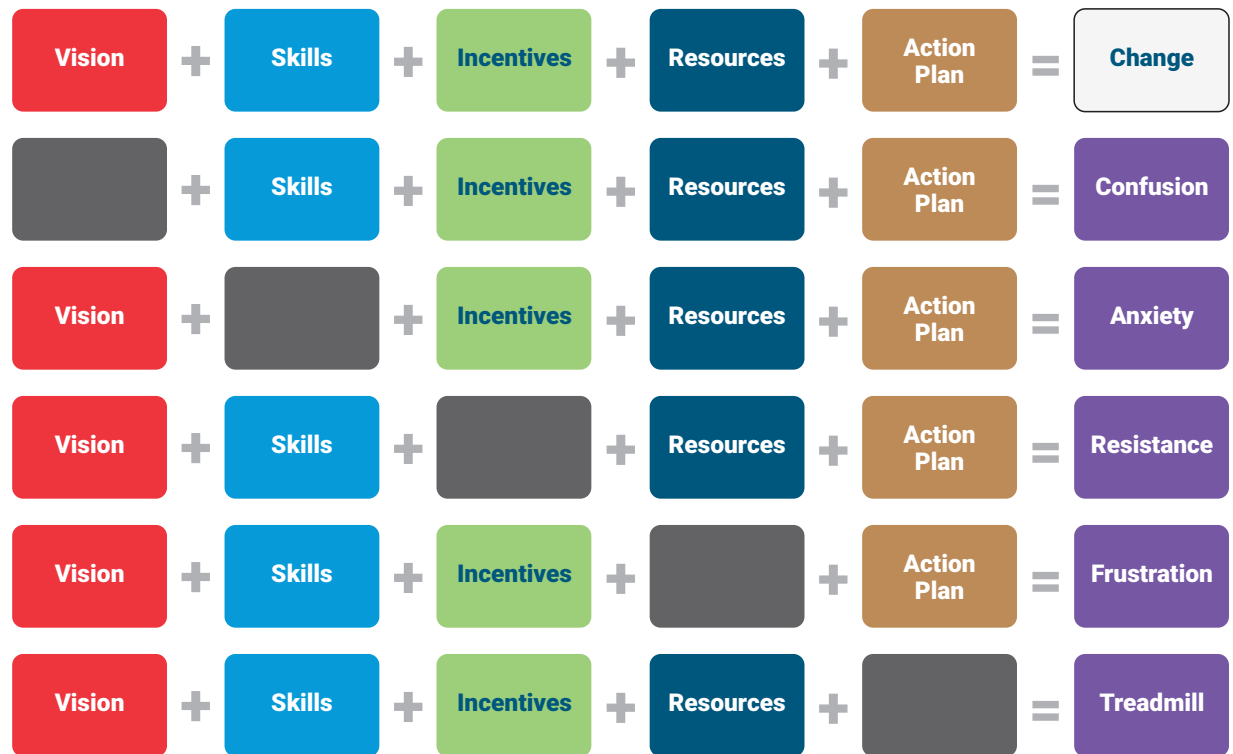
Ambrose, D. (1987), *Managing Complex Change*, Pittsburgh, PA: The Enterprise Group. Ltd.

The elements of vision, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan must be in place and understood for effective change to occur. During the change process, challenges will likely arise. This infographic can help identify what the next steps need to be. Is confusion present? Consider revisiting your vision and your *why*, to make sure that it is clearly understood. Is anxiety present? Consider whether you have provided the professional learning opportunities for your staff and/or validated their efforts so they know they have the necessary skillset to carry out the desired change. Is resistance present? Consider whether those showing resistance recognize the incentives—the value of the work for them, for their students, and for the system as a whole. This is also likely tied to the *why* of your work. Is frustration present? Consider whether the available resources are aligned to meet this new endeavor. Or perhaps there are not enough resources in place. Is there a feeling of being on a treadmill with this work, i.e. that a lot of work is being done with no progress? Consider revisiting your game plan, making the needed adjustments, and clearly communicating the *why* of the changes. Underlying each of these potential hurdles is the need for clear communication. That should be the first area of exploration before any additional adjustments are made.

The change process is one that is filled with many tempting parking spaces. It is pivotal that throughout your planning and implementation process, you ensure that you provide updates on the work, accomplishments, and the impact on student readiness for their postsecondary path. Keeping in mind the Law of Diffusion and ensuring that the vision, skills, incentives, resources, and action plan are visible and relevant can help ensure a smoother change process. As an educational team, if you feel that you are overcommunicating, you are likely at about the right level.

Identifying Your Teams

Identifying Your Teams

As the proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." This work is not "first order change," i.e. change that deals with doing more or less of something within your current framework. This work is "second order change."

Second order change creates a new way of seeing things completely. New learning is required along with new permissions to your educational stakeholders-- your district leaders, building level leaders, school counselors, teachers, students, parents, and the community. The PaCE Framework process—from planning to development to implementation—is designed to reduce reliance on personal anecdote and implicit bias in identifying the types of experiences and information a student should have in order to make the most informed decision about college and career planning. Second order change is going to push boundaries, including individual beliefs and biases. It is the job of all the educational stakeholders engaged in the planning and implementation of the PaCE Framework to wonder what change could look like that would truly impact the future of each student.

Keeping each educational stakeholder in mind in the planning, development, and implementation of your PaCE Framework is pivotal. You must engage all your stakeholders in this important work for second order change to take hold and take off. While your PaCE Framework process won't necessarily be fast, it can ultimately have a profound impact, providing students with a more cohesive educational experience resulting in a more prepared, career-ready graduate.

ISAC has developed a worksheet to help you identify your stakeholders and develop a plan for how they can become active participants in the implementation of your PaCE Framework. You are encouraged to utilize this resource in your planning.

District Leadership

District leadership across the state of Illinois looks different depending on the size of the district. The two consistent roles in district leadership are that of a district superintendent and a school board. The district leadership must be able to clearly articulate the *why* of the PaCE Framework work to all building leadership, staff members, students, parents, and community members. If there is a lack of clarity at this level, second order change will be difficult to achieve.

The role of the school board in relation to postsecondary and career readiness is one of understanding and support. Because the planning, development, and implementation of a PaCE Framework is second order change, there will be questions from some stakeholders. School board members must understand the *why* of the work and be able to articulate it along with the plan for the implementation of the PaCE Framework. When possible, the implementation of the PaCE Framework should be included in the district goals. This will help the work stay at the forefront of the discussions and work in the district. If this important work is done without the knowledge and support of the school board, issues will likely arise.

It is strongly recommended that the superintendent is engaged, at minimum, in the planning of your PaCE Framework. A key role of the superintendent is to align resources to help support the district's work. The superintendent should be at the table to discuss the plan and gain a clear understanding of this important work so postsecondary and career readiness can be prioritized in visioning and in personnel and financial decisions. The engagement of other staff members within district leadership should be considered in the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework, depending on their role and job description. While this work will not likely be specifically stated in their job descriptions, tenets of this work will be. When deciding who should be involved at the district level, it is important to remember that this is district-focused work. Regardless of whether the district is a K-8 district, a 9-12 district, or a K-12 district, everyone in the district has a role and responsibility in preparing students to be postsecondary and career ready.

School Building Leadership

As is true with the district leadership, building leadership across the state of Illinois can look different. Whether the building is elementary, middle, high school, or some combination, the building principal must be engaged in the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework. The PaCE Framework cannot be created and then passed off to building leadership with an instruction to take the needed steps for implementation. If at all possible, the planning and execution of the PaCE Framework should be woven into the school improvement plan. The building leadership must support the PaCE Framework, must be able to clearly articulate the *why*, and communicate the plan to all staff members, students, parents, and community members. If there is lack of clarity at building leadership level, the PaCE Framework will likely be viewed as just another district initiative and will likely not be fully realized.

The Illinois Performance Standards reinforce this important work. The following standards should be utilized as a guide for the engagement of building leadership in the planning and implementation of the PaCE Framework:

- I.a. Coordinates efforts to create and implement a vision for the school and defines desired results and goals that align with the overall school vision and lead to student improvement for all learners
- I.b. Ensures that the school's identity, vision, and mission drive school decisions
- II.a. Develops, implements, and monitors the outcomes of the school improvement plan and schoolwide student achievement data results to improve student achievement
- II.c. Collaborates with staff to allocate personnel, time, material, and adult learning resources appropriately to achieve the school improvement plan targets
- III.a. Works with staff to develop a consistent framework for effective teaching and learning that includes a rigorous and relevant standards-based curriculum, research-based instructional practices, and high expectations for student performance
- III.b. Creates a continuous improvement cycle that uses multiple forms of data and students' work samples to support individual, team, and schoolwide improvement goals, identify and address areas of improvement and celebrate successes
- III.f. Ensures the training, development, and support for high-performing instructional teacher teams to support adult learning and development to advance student learning and performance
- III.g. Develops systems and structures for staff professional development and sharing of effective practices including providing and protecting time allotted for development
- IV.b. Utilizes meaningful feedback of students, staff, families, and community in the evaluation of instructional programs and policies

   (New Leaders for New Schools & ISBE, n.d., pp. 1)

In districts with more than one building covering the same grade spans, considerable discussion will need to occur with the district leadership to determine if the PaCE Framework construction will be building-specific or district-specific. While this is a local decision, a more consistent PaCE Framework throughout the district will reduce issues and concerns about equity.

School Counselors

The number and placement of school counselors is not consistent in Illinois schools. School counselors can be working at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Wherever the school counselor works in your district, their involvement in the development and implementation of the PaCE Framework is pivotal. Your counselors are likely to have the greatest impact of any staff on a well planned and executed PaCE Framework. That said, the burden

of this work should not be placed solely on the shoulders of the school counselor. While school counselors have unique opportunities to coordinate discussions and guide the focus of group and individual planning meetings with students, teachers must be engaged in this important work as well.

Several of the standards in the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies support this important work. The following list of standards should be used as a guide for the involvement of the school counselor in the planning and execution of the PaCE Framework:

- M 3. Every student should graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary opportunities
- M 4. Every student should have access to a school counseling program
- M 5. Effective school counseling is a collaborative process involving school counselors, students, families, teachers, administrators, other school staff and educational stakeholders
- M 6. School counselors are leaders in the school, district, state and nation
- M 7. School counseling programs promote and enhance student academic, career and social/emotional outcomes
- B-PF 2. Demonstrate understanding of educational systems, legal issues, policies, research and trends in education
- B-PF 5. Use ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success to inform the implementation of a school counseling program
- B-PF 6. Demonstrate understanding of the impact of cultural, social and environmental influences on student success and opportunities
- B-PF 7. Demonstrate leadership through the development and implementation of a school counseling program
- B-PF 8. Demonstrate advocacy in a school counseling program
- B-PF 9. Create systemic change through the implementation of a school counseling program
- B-SS 2. Provide appraisal and advisement in large-group, classroom, small-group and individual settings
- B-SS 3. Provide short-term counseling in small-group and individual settings
- B-SS 5. Consult to support student achievement and success
- B-SS 6. Collaborate with families, teachers, administrators, other school staff and educational stakeholders for student achievement and success
- B-PA 4. Develop and implement action plans aligned with program goals and student data
- B-PA 5. Evaluate and report program results to the school community

(American School Counselor Association, 2019, p. 2)

Teachers

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."

- WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD

Teachers are at the heart of this work. One consistency in our educational system is the daily interactions that our students have with their teachers. Teachers have a greater impact on student development than any other factor in school, including programming, services, facilities, and even district and building leadership (Rand Education, 2012). It is important that teachers see the planning and implementation of the PaCE Framework as something that will improve student success and

outcomes. Their ability to regularly communicate and tie the PaCE Framework to students' current learning experiences is invaluable.

Teachers offer a unique perspective on student academic and social behavior that should be considered when planning the PaCE Framework. Teacher engagement in this work is supported by the following Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. The competent teacher:

- 1C) understands how teaching and student learning are influenced by development (physical, social and emotional, cognitive, linguistic), past experiences, talents, prior knowledge, economic circumstances, and diversity within the community
- 1F) understands [their] personal perspectives and biases and their effects on one's teaching
- 1I) stimulates prior knowledge and links new ideas to already familiar ideas and experiences
- 1J) differentiates strategies, materials, pace, levels of complexity, and language to introduce concepts and principles so that they are meaningful to students at varying levels of development and to students with diverse learning needs
- 1L) uses information about students' individual experiences, families, cultures, and communities to create meaningful learning opportunities and enrich instruction for all students
- 2D) understands the relationship of knowledge within the disciplines to other content areas and to life applications
- 2E) understands how diverse student characteristics and abilities affect processes of inquiry and influence patterns of learning
- 2F) knows how to access the tools and knowledge related to latest findings (e.g., research, practice, methodologies) and technologies in the disciplines
- 2G) understands the theory behind and the process for providing support to promote learning when concepts and skills are first being introduced
- 2I) evaluates teaching resources and materials for appropriateness as related to curricular content and each student's needs
- 2N) facilitates learning experiences that make connections to other content areas and to life experiences
- 3B) understands how to develop short- and long-range plans, including transition plans, consistent with curriculum goals, student diversity, and learning theory
- 3F) understands how to co-plan with other classroom teachers, parents or guardians, paraprofessionals, school specialists, and community representatives to design learning experiences
- 3G) understands how research and data guide instructional planning, delivery, and adaptation
- 3I) creates short-term and long-term plans to achieve the expectations for student learning
- 3K) incorporates experiences into instructional practices that relate to a student's current life experiences and to future life experiences
- 3L) creates approaches to learning that are interdisciplinary and that integrate multiple content areas
- 3M) develops plans based on student responses and provides for different pathways based on student needs
- 3P) works with others to adapt and modify instruction to meet individual student needs
- 4C) understands how to help students work cooperatively and productively in groups
- 4D) understands factors (e.g., self-efficacy, positive social interaction) that influence motivation and engagement
- 4K) uses strategies to create a smoothly functioning learning community in which students assume responsibility for themselves and one another, participate in decision-making, work collaboratively and independently, use appropriate technology, and engage in purposeful learning activities
- 5D) understands disciplinary and interdisciplinary instructional approaches and how they relate to life and career experiences
- 5F) knows strategies to maximize student attentiveness and engagement
- 5I) uses multiple teaching strategies, including adjusted pacing and flexible grouping, to engage students in active learning opportunities that promote the development of critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and performance capabilities
- 5K) varies [their] role in the instructional process as instructor, facilitator, coach or audience in relation to the content and purposes of instruction and the needs of students
- 5N) uses technology to accomplish differentiated instructional objectives that enhance learning for each student
- 8A) understands schools as organizations within the larger community context
- 8D) understands the benefits, barriers, and techniques involved in parent and family collaborations

- 8E) understands school- and work-based learning environments and the need for collaboration with all organizations (e.g, businesses, community agencies, nonprofit organizations) to enhance student learning
- 8F) understands the importance of participating on collaborative and problem-solving teams to create effective academic and behavioral interventions for all students
- 8K) participates in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving with colleagues and other professionals to achieve success for all students
- 8L) initiates collaboration with others to create opportunities that enhance student learning
- 8Q) establishes respectful and productive relationships with parents or guardians and seeks to develop cooperative partnerships to promote students learning and well-being
- 8R) uses conflict resolution skills to enhance the effectiveness of collaboration and teamwork
- 8T) identifies and utilizes community resources to enhance student learning and to provide opportunities for students to explore career opportunities
- 9A) evaluates best practices and research-based materials against benchmarks within the disciplines
- 9E) is cognizant of [their] emerging and developed leadership skills and the applicability of those skills within a variety of learning communities

(Illinois State Board of Education, 2013, pp. 1-8)

Students

Student voice in the change process is often overlooked in our educational systems. For systemic change to happen, students must be engaged in the process.

"In spite of the evidence, researchers and advocates still find that students are continuously neglected, and sometimes actively denied, any sort of role in their school's improvement programs" (Fletcher 2005, p. 4).

Engaging students meaningfully in the change process strengthens their commitment to not only their education, but also to their community and democracy as a whole (Fletcher, 2005). In their book, *Student Voice: From Invisible to Invaluable*, co-authors Michael Lubelfeld, Nick Polyak, and PJ Caposey, all of whom are superintendents in Illinois, note that student voice is often invisible. "The failure to systematically include students and listen to their viewpoints is a contributing factor, which explains why schools have changed little since the 19th Century" (2018, p. xvii).

Each district must determine the appropriate level of student engagement in the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework. "Covey's research on lasting change clearly presents that the key to lasting change is changing paradigms and then behavior will follow. Our challenge is: What are schools doing to intentionally and 'pridefully' link their kids to their community?" (Lubelfeld et al. 2018, p. 25)

Lubelfeld, Polyak and Caposey created a framework for implementing student voice, titled "Askem".

A — Ask
S — Support
K — Know (your kids)
E — Empower
M — Monitor

Using ASKEM, the first step is to ask the students for their ideas, experiences, and opinions related to components of the Illinois PaCE Framework. Students are supported by not only being asked to share their ideas, experiences, and opinions, but they are also validated as important partners in this work. ASKEM recognizes how important it is to know and understand students in order to empower and monitor them.

Ensuring students have a voice and are heard in PaCE planning empowers them to fully engage in the process. They impact this second order change through active engagement and participation based on their individual strengths as a student. Students are then monitored by adults as they take on the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework as determined by the local district. Throughout the entire process, students and adults work as partners.

"Together, adults and students examine what they have learned through creating, implementing, and supporting meaningful student involvement, including benefits and challenges" (Fletcher, 2005, p.6).

Student involvement in the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework has the dual benefit of increasing the chances that this second order change succeeds and, more importantly, providing students with an opportunity to learn skills that will help increase their postsecondary and career readiness.

"This transformation [leveraging student voice] is truly a win-win for students and leaders. Educators must simply do two things to begin the paradigm shift necessary to take this forward. The first is easy - believe in the brilliance of your students. The second is hard - relinquish some element of control. (Lubelfeld et al. 2018, p. xviii)

It is undoubtedly a challenge to relinquish some element of control and to determine what that will look like in your district/school. Take the next step. As leaders, we must change our behaviors, and sometimes beliefs, in order to achieve different results. Student engagement can only help move the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework to fruition, and make it truly impactful.

Parents/Families

Parental/family engagement in our educational system looks different for every student, depending on many factors. While there is a lot of research available related to the positive impact of parental and family engagement in student learning, there is little readily available data that demonstrates the impact of it in the improvement process. But considering the positive impact of family engagement on learning, it's likely that having parents/family engaged in the planning, development and implementation of the PaCE Framework will also be beneficial.

In Illinois, schools are required to engage families in the review of their student handbooks on a yearly basis, in annual meetings related to English Language Learners programs, and in connection with other activities. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has developed the Family Engagement Framework as a resource guide for districts/schools to use when evaluating and/or planning. The following standards for a family engagement system should be considered when determining the level of their engagement in the planning, development, and/or implementation of the PaCE Framework:

- 1D. District and school leadership support the development and implementation of an effective family engagement system that is mindful of diverse school-communities and responsive to student and family needs
- 1F. District and school personnel build the capacity of staff to effectively engage families in supporting student learning and healthy development
- 1G. District and school personnel build the capacity of families to meaningfully engage in activities that support student learning and healthy development

- 1H. District and school personnel partner with families to support student learning and healthy development

(Illinois State Board of Education, 2015, pp. 20-21)

Community

"It takes a village to raise a child."

Educators tend to utilize our internal resources extremely well, and struggle with utilizing the resources outside of our walls. While this has improved over recent years, districts working on the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework must engage with the educational stakeholders outside of their buildings. Good schools impact community and business growth and home values, so community members have a vested interest in ensuring their schools do well.

ISBE has one standard that speaks to this, "1.I District and school personnel partner with community organizations to enhance family engagement efforts" (2015, p. 21). Not only can community organizations help enhance family engagement, but community organizations can also be an invaluable resource in the implementation of the PaCE Framework. Depending on the components of the PaCE Framework, the level of engagement and support of the community can make or break students' ability to achieve some learning experiences.

ISAC has developed a resource for schools and districts to use in engaging with the community, On PaCE to Thrive: Guide To Cultivating Community Action For Postsecondary and Career Readiness. The guide looks at how to engage potential members from the community including, but not limited to, the local community college, university, library, chamber of commerce, other business representatives, service organizations, community-based organizations, and governmental agencies. Each district should identify and explore the unique characteristics of their community to help ensure that the right community representatives are at the table during the planning, development, and/or implementation of the PaCE Framework.

Building Educational Stakeholder Understanding

Building Educational Stakeholder Understanding

Once the educational stakeholders have been identified, decisions need to be made about whether they will all be on one team, or if multiple teams will be preferable. Regardless of the structure, the next step is to help build each educational stakeholder's understanding.

Keep the *Why* Front and Center

As a leader, you may understand the *why* of this work, however it is likely that not everyone shares the same *why*. In some ways, it's helpful to take a step back before moving forward. Take the team(s) through the **Identifying the *Why*** questions and process shared in the **Beginning the Process** section of this guide to help identify and deepen their understanding of the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework.

Keeping the *why* in front of stakeholders while using the tools available to manage the complex change process is extremely important, especially early in your PaCE Framework journey

Building Understanding

You may run into the following objections or questions as you engage with each educational stakeholder and work to improve their understanding of the planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework:

This is high school work.

Undoubtedly, some of your educational stakeholders will view this as a topic to focus on at the high school level. If you are a leader in a K-12 district, you can counter this notion and assure stakeholders that this is a district-wide focus. If you are a leader in a K-8 district, there is work that you can do to help students be postsecondary and career ready. If you are a leader in a 9-12 district, you can not only work with your district, but can also work with any feeder districts and include them in this work. Consider this resource to help build a better understanding:
Magnuson, C. S., & Starr, M. F. (2000). *How Early Is Too Early to Begin Life Career Planning? The Importance of the Elementary School Years* Journal of Career Development, 27(2), 89-101.

There are so many acronyms in education. What do they all mean?

As a leader in education, you know that we have acronyms for everything. Providing a key to acronyms for stakeholders is crucial, as well as definitions for terms that may be unfamiliar to them. When any terminology related to the Illinois PaCE Framework is used, it is imperative that everyone is talking about the same thing in the district and greater community. A shared understanding of terminology will improve communication and help align the PaCE Framework across multiple stakeholders and entities. Several state boards, agencies, and external partners in the state of Illinois saw the need for this and have created a document to help provide clarity throughout the state of Illinois. Consider this resource to help build understanding around the terminology related to postsecondary and career readiness as you prepare for the development and implementation of the PaCE Framework.

Is this work another unfunded mandate by Illinois? Or...Who is saying that we must do this work?

Work related to the Illinois PaCE Framework is not mandated by the state of Illinois. In the spring of 2015, the Illinois House adopted House Resolution 477 (HR 477), a resolution calling for the agencies participating in the Illinois Pathways Interagency Committee, which included the State Board of Education, Community College Board, Board of Higher Education,

Student Assistance Commission, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and Department of Employment Security, to study methods to better prepare high school graduates for success in college and/or career. That resolution led to the formation of four advisory committees focused on distinct strategy areas for improving student outcomes. More than 120 stakeholders participated in the study and consensus building work and recommendations were presented to the Illinois P-20 Council. The College and Career Readiness Committee of the P-20 Council adopted the recommendations. In 2016, HB 5729 was introduced, a bill that incorporated the work of the HR 477 committees and community feedback. The bill was passed and signed into law in July of 2016, and Public Act 99-0674 established the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act.

No component of the PWR Act is mandatory, however it does offer an approach to helping students achieve college and career readiness. The Illinois PaCE Framework is one of four components related to the PWR Act. To learn more about the PWR Act, visit https://www.isbe.net/pwr or https://pwract.org.

Has this work been done by someone else? Or…. can we adopt someone else's framework?

The Illinois PaCE Framework was developed in conjunction with the ISAC, ISBE, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The Illinois PaCE Framework can be accessed by visiting https://www.isac.org/pace/documents/pace-framework.pdf?v3. While this framework and other district PaCE Frameworks are readily available, going through the process and making the Illinois PaCE Framework your own will help with understanding and impact. Because the resources of each district are different, each district is highly encouraged to go through the process and follow their own plan using the resources provided by ISAC.

ISAC offers several support options to assist schools in understanding and adopting the Illinois PaCE Framework, or in developing a customized PaCE framework to fit their needs. To help build additional understanding, consider attending a PaCE Overview support session. This session provides an overview of the Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act legislation, an in-depth explanation of the Illinois PaCE framework, the steps involved with implementing your own PaCE aligned framework, as well as PaCE support and resources available from ISAC. This session, available in person or via webinar, can be scheduled but submitting the PaCE Support Request Form (https://www.isac.org/pace/pace-request-form.html).

Developing Your Game Plan

Developing Your Game Plan

The *why* of this important work has been identified…. check. The key educational stakeholders have been identified…. check. The organization of the key educational stakeholders into a team or teams to get this work started…. check. The next step is to develop your game plan.

The great news is that you do not have to do this on your own. ISAC is ready, willing, and able to help your team(s) get going with this work. Before you contact us, make sure that it is the general desire of the team(s) to utilize this support. You may want to try to tackle the additional planning, development, and implementation of the PaCE Framework on your own. If so, know that ISAC is willing to help at any stage and has additional resources available for your use.

ISAC Recommended Process and Resources

1. Take an Inventory - These resources will help your team walk through an inventory to assess what is currently being done within the school or district in relation to each key area of your PaCE Framework. This is the first step towards developing your PaCE Framework.
  • Career Exploration and Development
      For use with the Illinois PaCE Framework
      For use with a customized PaCE Framework
  • Financial Aid and Literacy
      For use with the Illinois PaCE Framework
      For use with a customized PaCE Framework
  • Postsecondary education
      For use with the Illinois PaCE Framework
      For use with a customized PaCE Framework

2. Prioritize Gaps - This resource is the second step in the process and will help you identify which benchmarks should be addressed first.

3. Action Plan - This resource is the third step towards the development of your customized PaCE Framework. The gaps identified through the prioritization process will be listed and an action plan will be created for all activities.

4. PaCE Framework template - This resource can help if you decide to work on developing a customized PaCE Framework.

5. On PaCE to Thrive: Guide to Cultivating Community Action for College and Career Readiness - This resource can help when planning the engagement of your community.

6. Connecting the dots for PaCE, CCPE, and CCRI - This resource is helpful in providing the background of the PWR Act as well as a crosswalk between the Illinois PaCE Framework elements, College and Career Pathway Endorsement (CCPE) framework, and ISBE College and Career Readiness Indicators (CCRI).

Remember to keep the Managing Complex Change framework in mind when creating your game plan; reference it if you run into trouble.

Options for Working with ISAC

If you determine that you would like ISAC's assistance from the beginning, you are encouraged to visit ISAC's PaCE website to identify the different support options that are available and register for training. It is important to note that when registering for the support session(s), the PaCE Request Form should be submitted no more than six (6) months and no less than four (4) weeks prior to the event.

Support Options

PaCE Overview (1 hour)
This session provides an overview of the Postsecondary Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act, an in-depth explanation of the Illinois PaCE Framework, the steps involved with developing and implementing your own school-/district-specific PaCE-aligned framework, as well as PaCE support and resources available through ISAC. Available in person or via webinar.

PaCE Framework Development Workshop (2-3 hours)
This workshop takes a school/district team through the development of their own PaCE-aligned framework. During the workshop, an ISAC facilitator will lead a discussion with the team to assist them in building consensus and in developing their own framework. Upon completion of the workshop, the school/district team will receive a formatted version of their framework from ISAC as a follow up. A school/district team is required in order to schedule a workshop.

Implementation Support (1 hour)
These sessions take a school/district team through the implementation of a PaCE Framework. During this series of three, one-hour meetings, an ISAC facilitator will meet with the implementation team to go over the three steps of the implementation process, provide guidance through the completion of the implementation worksheets, and answer any questions. Upon completion of all three sessions, the implementation team will be equipped to implement their PaCE Framework. Only the initial meeting date needs to be included on the request form. The second and third meeting dates will be determined upon completion of the first meeting.

To schedule a session, please complete the PaCE Support Request Form. For more information about the Illinois PaCE Framework, email isac.pace@illinois.gov.

Training Options

PaCE Implementation Leader Training (2 hours)
The PaCE Implementation Leader Training provides an in-depth perspective on the Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework and the implementation process for those who wish to serve as implementation leaders in their schools. Upon completion of this training, implementation leaders will have a better understanding of how they can assist their schools in implementing the Illinois PaCE Framework, or can serve as a liaison between their school and ISAC, if the school wishes to develop their own customized framework.

Registration details, including dates and locations, are available online on the PaCE Calendar.

Following Your Game Plan: Implementation

Following Your Game Plan: Implementation

As many of us experience in our personal and professional lives, developing a plan can be very different than actually following through with it. Consider plans you may have made in your personal life. Have you created that will yet? If not, you are in good company. Only four in ten American adults have followed through with creating a will or a living trust (Walls, 2017). How about following through with your last New Year's resolution? Statistics show that less than 10% of people follow through with their New Year's resolutions (Prossack, 2018).

The plan included in your PaCE Framework is also not immune to tempting parking places. So how do you follow through and implement your PaCE Framework? This section of the Illinois PaCE Implementation Guide is designed to help you keep driving past those parking places so you can see your students thrive in their future.

Implementation

While you may not be able to ensure all the activities will be implemented in the first year of utilizing your PaCE Framework, ensuring that your PaCE Framework has the needed support for eventual, full implementation should be a top priority for your district and associated schools. The use of goals and corresponding tasks will help you develop a plan that will be actionable — and acted on — in the future. It is particularly important to keep progressing on the activities your students experience to help them be better prepared for their postsecondary plans.

The more individuals in your district are engaged with this work, the more likely it will gain traction and achieve full implementation. If possible, one or more district or school improvement goals should be constructed around the implementation of the PaCE Framework. If you have completed the third step towards the implementation of your customized PaCE Framework, the Action Plan, you can take the identified information for each benchmark (Who is involved and what is their role? When will it take place? Where will it take place?) and create the goal(s) needed to support this work. The following template is provided as an example to use in constructing your district and/or school improvement goals:

Goals	Rationale/ Description	Tasks to be completed	Date to be completed	Completion date	Person(s) responsible	Outcome / Product

The following are explanations for each component in this construct:

- **Goal.** It is recommended that you create a SMART goal that is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic or relevant, and timebound.
- **Rationale/Description.** Provide your rationale for the goal and/or your description of the goal.
- **Tasks to be completed.** List each task to be completed in a separate cell.
- **Date to be completed.** List the target date by which each task should be completed.
- **Completion date.** List the actual completion date when each task is completed. This should be updated as you make progress on your tasks.
- **Person(s) responsible.** List the person(s) who are responsible for making sure each task is completed.
- **Outcome/Product.** List the outcome and/or product for each task. If there is a product for a specific task, you are encouraged to provide an avenue (website, link to the document, etc.) to reach it. Below is a sample benchmark with

the associated goal from an Action Plan for the fictitious Abraham Lincoln High School. While your benchmark may be different, this example may be helpful in understanding how to use the construct to keep you laser-focused on the implementation of your PaCE Framework.

Benchmark:	Attend a financial aid award letter workshop		
☒ Financial Literacy	☐ Postsecondary	☐ Career
Who is involved and what is their role?	Counselor Jane Doe will organize the workshop, all counseling staff and ISACorps member will attend the workshops
When will it take place?	10/1, 10/10, and 10/24 from 4-7 PM
Where wil it take place?	All workshops will be held in the school library
Action items:	Reserve space in the library, reach out to administration to setup an all-call and email blast to advertise, secure ISACorps assistance for each date.

The Action Plan document can serve as the starting point for developing a detailed plan that includes specific goals, tasks, and outcomes. See the example below:

Goal	Rationale/ Description	Tasks to be completed	Date to be completed	Completion date	Person(s) responsible	Outcome / Product
Increase the number of attendees at the FAFSA completion workshop in the 2019-2020 school year by 10% when compared to the 2018-2019 school year.	The FAFSA document is an important part of considering options for post-secondary training that is aligned with an individual's career goal. The improved attendance at FAFSA completion workshops at Abraham Lincoln High School should result in a higher number of students completing the FAFSA when the application is first opened for completion in October.	Reserve the library for FAFSA completion workshop on 10.1.19, 10.10.19, and 10.24.19	5.21.19	5.20.19	Counseling Center Administrative Assistant	Reservation confirmation
		Invite ISACorps members to attend the FAFSA completion workshops	5.27.19	5.27.19	Lead Counselor	Invitation sent via email with an RSVP list of ISACorps members
		Create a student invite to be included in the announcements, school website, Twitter account, and Facebook account	9.2.19		School Counselors	Invite
		Create a parent invite to be included on the school website, Twitter account, Facebook account, and the August and	9.3.19		School Counselors	
		Create and send a reminder email blast to senior parents/students about the upcoming FAFSA completion workshop	9.24.19, 10.3.19, and 10.17.19		School Counselors with Administrator support for distribution	Emails distributed to all parents and students of seniors
		Create a follow up survey for parents/students who attended the FAFSA completion workshop for ways to improve the workshop	10.2.19, 10.11.19, and 10.25.19		School Counselors	Survey results to be used for future planning
		Create and distribute follow up survey for all senior parents/students to track the FAFSA completion workshop	11.5.19		School Counselors	Survey results to determine if the goal was achieved or not
		Review the survey results and plan for ways to improve FAFSA completion for the 2020-2021 school year.	11.29.19		School Counselors	Plan for implementation in the 2020-2021 school year

Staying the Course

Staying the course for full implementation of your PaCE Framework will require the team to review the included activities, monitor the impact of the activities on the readiness of the students, and make the needed adjustments to continually improve. The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle, or some similar method of constant review and adjustment, should be utilized for this important work. The PDSA cycle comes from the medical field and is used to help develop a plan (Plan), carry out your plan (Do), observe and learn from the execution of your plan (Study), and determine what changes should be made to the plan for improvement (Act). This is a continuous cycle that will help you refine the activities included in your PaCE Framework to best meet the needs of the students in your district and/or school. If there are identified activities that need to be implemented, or adjusted for improvement, the creation of new goals and associated tasks will help in staying focused on this work.

Additionally, if you run into roadblocks from staff in the implementation of your PaCE Framework, remember to utilize the Managing Complex Change (Lippitt and Ambrose, 1987) framework. Objections and hurdles created by staff who may express confusion, anxiety, resistance, and/or frustration can be identified and addressed by reviewing and making the needed changes to the vision, skills, incentives, and resources, respectively. If staff feel that they are on a treadmill and not going anywhere, revisiting the game plan and any goals that were created will help keep this work moving forward. The need for clear and ongoing communication to all the identified stakeholders throughout the implementation of your PaCE Framework will be crucial to achieving this complex change.

Be patient about seeing an impact on your students' readiness for their postsecondary plans. Complex change is an iterative process. If you are creating new activities for your PaCE Framework on an ongoing basis, the realization of the impact on student readiness may take longer. That said, you may realize some gains fairly quickly.

Many factors can come into play in realizing the impact of your PaCE Framework implementation. If you are not achieving an impact on student readiness, consider surveying current students and/or alumni to gain their insight on needed areas of focus. You may also consider bringing your stakeholders back together to review your PaCE Framework and consider possible adjustments. Conduct an internal assessment with a focus on improvements, rather than looking at who to blame for lack of progress. Remember your *why* and stay the course. The work on your PaCE Framework is likely more than what you were doing previously to help your students prepare for their postsecondary education and move forward. Your PaCE Framework is a living, breathing document that can, and likely should, be changed to better align with and serve the needs of your students. You may not see the immediate fruits of this collective work, but if you stay the course and work your PaCE plan, you will see positive change.

Conclusion

Conclusion

ISAC is committed to helping Illinois school districts and schools with this important work. We hope you find this guide and additional resources useful in implementing your own PaCE Framework, with or without the assistance of ISAC.

Every student in Illinois should have the opportunity to engage in purposeful activities that better prepare them for their future. Having a plan is like turning on the lights in a dark room. When you walk into a room that you've never been in with the lights out, you will likely stub your toe. At the very least, you may stumble through it. Similarly, many students have not yet navigated their individual path towards a postsecondary plan. Some students will have other guidance or will find their way to postsecondary education even through the proverbial dark. But a school that has a PaCE plan in place can provide a guiding light to students, offering them options and pathways they might never have seen, and helping them navigate the path effectively. Using the Illinois PaCE Framework or a locally-developed PaCE Framework will improve our students' readiness and empower them to define and succeed in the postsecondary and career path that works best for them.

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Resources

College Board and Roadtrip Nation (n.d.) Career Finder. Retrieved from
https://roadtripnation.com/edu/careerfinder
- Whether you're just starting to explore career paths or already have yours planned out, Career Finder helps you take the next steps with the perfect combination of data and stories.
- Get tons of careers, majors, and high school classes that match what you like to do.

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- "Get a jump on college planning and find the colleges you want and the scholarships you need. Use Cappex to get matched with possible scholarships, to compare colleges, and to figure out your chances of admission at colleges of interest to you." (ISAC Student Portal-Resources)

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https://fafsa.ed.gov/spa/fafsa4c/?locale=en_US#/landing
- "FAFSA4caster will help you understand your options for paying for college. Provide some basic information and we'll estimate your eligibility for federal student aid. Your estimate will be shown in the "College Cost Worksheet" where you can also provide estimated amounts of other student aid and savings that can go towards your college education."
- "Want to know your chances of getting financial aid for college? This tool uses basic information you provide to help you estimate your eligibility for federal student aid, including the Pell Grant, work study and student loans." (ISAC Student Portal-Resources)

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https://www.illinoisworknet.com/explore/Pages/ExploreCareers.aspx
- "Use Illinois workNet to explore careers, job training programs, and look up salaries. You can even build a resume, search for jobs, negotiate your salary and get tips on how to succeed in your new position." (ISAC Student Portal-Resources)
- Look at the 8-slide presentation, right hand of the screen under "Videos", to gain additional information and for guidance on how to explore the career clusters.

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https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Qualify/Pages/Resume.aspx
- Utilize this resource to help with the many facets of the interview process; additional resources available for help with
  - Cover letters (https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/OptimalLetter%20Help%20Guide_FINAL.pdf)
  - Assessment help with skills inventory, accomplishment sheet, and proficiency list
    (https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/OptimalAssessment%20Help%20Guide_FINAL.pdf)
  - Resume builder
    (https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/OptimalResume%20Help%20Guide_FINAL.pdf)
  - Interview help
    (https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/OptimalInterview%20Help%20Guide_FINAL.pdf)

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https://www.illinoisworknet.com/explore/Pages/SkillandInterestSurveys.aspx
- "Career Cluster Inventory (5-25 minutes) - This inventory will identify which career cluster(s) may be a good fit for you."
- "Interest Profiler (10-20 minutes) - The Interest Profiler can help you identify your interests and match them with a wide variety of careers. Results are displayed as a score between 0 and 30."
- "SKILLS Profiler (10-20 minutes) - The SKILLS Profiler helps you identify occupations that use the skills you like. It also helps you recognize skills that transfer between occupations."
- "Work Importance Locator (5-15 minutes) - The Work Importance Locator can help you learn more about your work values and help you decide what kinds of jobs and careers you might want to explore."

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https://studentportal.isac.org/events
- "Looking for a FREE financial aid presentation, FAFSA® completion workshop, or a college fair in your area? Check our calendar to find a virtual event or in-person near you. Don't see anything close by or in the near future? Check with your high school to see if your school is holding an event on campus. Or contact your local ISACorps member for free one-on-one assistance. If you are planning to attend a FAFSA Completion Workshop, check out our *What to Bring to a FAFSA Completion Workshop* before you go!" (ISAC Student Portal-Toolbox-Event Calendar)

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- A checklist for students in grades 8 through 12 focused around the same three areas as the Illinois PaCE Framework (Career: Career Exploration and Development, Money: Financial Aid and Literacy, and College: Postsecondary Education Exploration, Preparation, and Selection)

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https://www.isac.org/students/during-college/types-of-financial-aid/loans/
- Learn about the different types of federal government and private student loans, parent loans, alternative loans, and consolidation loans

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https://studentportal.isac.org/jobs/jobs/
- Find an internship or summer job

U.S. Department of Education (n.d.). *College Scorecard*. Retrieved from
https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/
- "Check out College Scorecard to compare colleges and degree programs by cost, graduation rates, and average salaries after graduation. Know the facts so you can make smarter decisions about which college and degree program is right for you." (ISAC Student Portal-Resources)