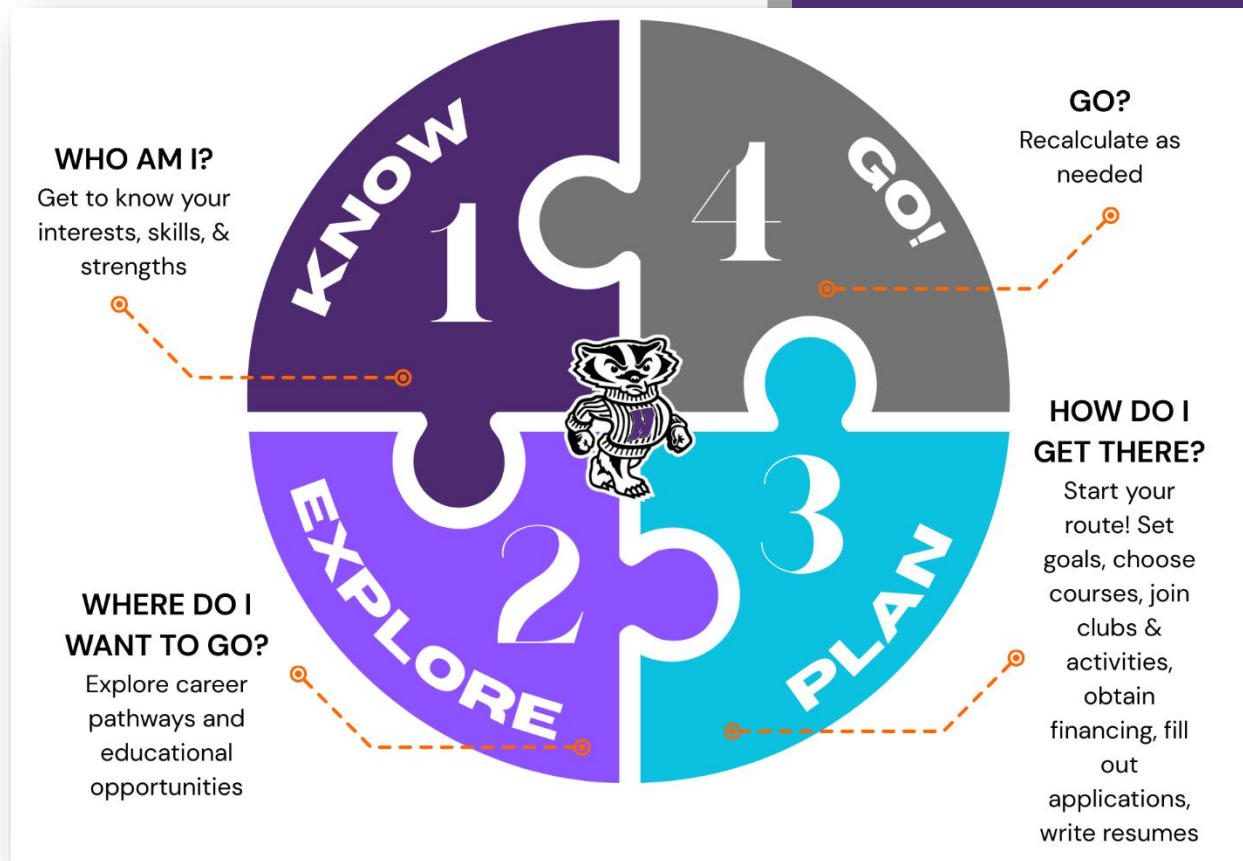


2025-2026

Academic and Career Planning



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School District of Niagara

2025-2026

Introduction

Academic and Career Planning (ACP) is a student-driven, adult-supported process that empowers students to explore their strengths, interests, and values while developing a clear and informed plan for life after high school. At Niagara High School, ACP ensures that every student graduate's college and/or career ready through intentional self-exploration, career exploration, and career management skill development.

The School District of Niagara's ACP plan aligns with the Wisconsin Career Readiness Standards (WCRS), ensuring students develop essential skills in the areas of Career Ready (CAR), Learning Ready (LRN), and Life Ready (LIF). Through structured planning, reflection, and real-world experiences, students build communication skills (LIF.2. A B), leadership capacity (LIF.4.B), and continuous career planning habits (CAR.3.C), preparing them for lifelong success.

The Academic and Career Planning (ACP) program in the School District of Niagara aligns with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Education for Employment (EFE) standards. The program ensures that all students in grades 6–12 engage in a structured process of career awareness, exploration, planning, and preparation.

Through the ACP process, students:

- **Develop self-awareness** by identifying their interests, skills, values, and strengths.
- **Explore career pathways** using labor market information and career cluster frameworks.
- **Connect academics to careers** by understanding how coursework aligns with postsecondary education and workforce opportunities.
- **Engage in career readiness experiences** such as job shadowing, career speakers, dual credit opportunities, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework.
- **Create and annually update an Academic and Career Plan** that includes coursework planning, postsecondary goals, and employability skill development.

The district integrates ACP into advisory periods, core academic instruction, and career-focused activities to ensure compliance with Wisconsin Statute 121.02(1)(m) and alignment with DPI's ACP implementation framework. Families are informed and engaged in the ACP process through regular communication and planning meetings.

This approach ensures that Niagara students graduate prepared for college, career, and community success.

Foundation & Planning: Building a Strong Career Readiness Framework

CAREER READINESS MISSION/VISION

Niagara's Most Important Values

We Will...

Be Active Partners With...

- Students
- Parents
- Community Members
- Local Businesses
- Colleges/Universities

Be Respectful of Others...

Our students and staff will always treat others with dignity and embrace diversity.

Foster an Environment Where People Are Passionate and Engaged...

Our students and staff will take pride in their work, accomplishments, and the School District of Niagara.

Prepare and Educate Children for Lifelong Success...

As an educational institution and as individuals, we will never be satisfied with the status quo and will strive for progressive change.

This mission strongly aligns with:

- **LIF.4.B** – Leadership and engagement
- **CAR.3.C** – Ongoing career planning and goal setting
- **LIF.2.B** – Communication skills
- **LRN.1.C** – Applying academic skills in real-world contexts

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Students demonstrate WCRS in action through:

- Youth Apprenticeship participation
- CNA Certification completion
- Mock Interviews and Resume Development
- Portfolio Presentations
- Work-Based Learning experiences

Real-life examples of student success stories:

- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18G3bEgAhV/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BEJHrWw7K/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DmFNV8n73/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1AwStkFHv6/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/14RHv4ATQjw/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DTEQVtnWp/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1CTfEZEJ8R/>

CAREER READINESS LEADERSHIP & TEAM

District leadership supporting ACP includes:

- District Administrator – Nathaniel Burklund
- High School Principal – Scott Trevillian
- School Counselors – Sherri Petschar, Kathleen Parkinson
- CTE Instructor – Jeff Swanson
- Special Education Instructor – Angela Koprowski
- Middle/High School Teachers – Betsy Hartwig, Nicole Connors, Gwen Sternhagen, Megan Lynch, Ben Laarman
- Elementary Teacher – Sherri Champagne
- FLEX Advisors
- Work-Based Learning Coordinator – Sherri Petschar
- Niagara Parent
- Niagara Student

CAREER READINESS POLICIES

- Graduation requirement: Electronic ACP Portfolio (Class of 2020 and beyond)
- 10 Hours of Community Service per Year
- Financial Literacy (½ credit required beginning Class of 2029)
- Work-Based Learning Participation Criteria

DISTRICT CAREER READINESS DATA

- CTE Participants: 20
- CTE Concentrators: 11
- Students in Youth Apprenticeship: 1
- Students in Work-Based Learning: 14
- Dual Credit Participants (NWTC, UWGB, Bay College): 17
- Industry-Recognized Credentials Earned: 2
- Employer Partners: 4
- Career-Based Learning Experiences Offered: 5

CURRENT PROGRESS AND FUTURE GOALS

Current Progress

- Strong Integration of ACP Portfolio Requirement
- Comprehensive CTE Programming
- Dual Credit Partnerships with NWTC and UWGB
- Required Volunteer Hours
- Expansion of Financial Literacy Requirement

Future Goals

- Increase Parental Awareness and Engagement
- Expand Employer Partnerships
- Increase Industry-Recognized Credentials
- Continue Strengthening Technological Infrastructure
- Continue to Ensure Equitable Access to Career Readiness Opportunities for All Students

ACP Process & Student Supports

ACP FORMAL PROCESS

Each student engages in structured ACP activities annually:

- Grades 9–12: 4-Year Academic Plan reviewed on an annual basis with both the Counselor and FLEX mentor
- Annual Guidance Counselor Meeting (Grade 10 required)
- FLEX Advisor mentorship and monitoring: Daily Flex hour with mentor throughout middle and high school. Individual meetings occur monthly
- Portfolio artifacts collected yearly
- Senior Portfolio Presentation (graduation requirement)

Students receive one-on-one advising at least annually to review academic progress and postsecondary plans.

Add frequency and program particulars.

ACP CURRICULUM, SUPPORT, AND SERVICES

PK–5 ACP Structure

Career Awareness and Self-Exploration

- Identify strengths through portfolio, talent, or interest inventories

Community Helper Units

- Engage in lessons about careers
- Student interviews of community workers or role play of jobs within the community
- Create classroom job charts taking turns with classroom responsibilities including library helper, line leader, or classroom inspector
- Make connections to real-world jobs and discuss how skills and interests connect to careers

Career-Related Read-Aloud

- Read books about different professions and ask reflection questions such as, “What skills does this person use?” or “Do you think this job would be fun?”

Support: Skill Building and Reflection

- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Integration
- Goal-setting circles: “One thing I’m good at” + “One thing I want to learn.”
- Growth mindset language tied to learning and future goals.
- Parent/Family Engagement
- Family take-home activities about careers (e.g., talking about parents’ or caregivers’ jobs).
- “Career at Home” worksheets to reinforce connections outside school.
- Classroom Reflection Journals
- Weekly journal prompts:
 - “What did I enjoy learning this week?”
 - “What do I want to learn more about?”

Services & Experiences

- Career Guest Visitors
- Invite local professionals (librarian, veterinarian, police officer) to speak and answer questions.
- Provide simple visuals/photos of tools they use.
- Field Trips

- Visits to community places (fire station, library, farm, recycling center).
- Follow up with activities to connect with classroom learning.
- Career Centers/Interest Boards in Classrooms
- Display photos and props related to jobs to spark curiosity.
- Career Awareness Stations
- Rotating stations where students explore job tools (play money, stethoscopes, measuring tools) and talk about what people do in those jobs.

6–8 ACP Structure

Career Ready Components

- Interest and Learning Style Inventories – Xello
- Compare and contrast traits with career clusters – Collaborative Classroom
- Discuss how learning preferences connect with workplace – Collaborative Classroom
- Introduction of career clusters and labor market jobs – FLEX
- Discuss prerequisites, electives, dual credit, and CTE pathways – Badger Meetings & FLEX
- Identify how middle school classes are foundations for career skills – Classes

Career Exploration Activities

- Career Research Projects – Integrated Class Curriculum
- Small business and real-world scenarios – Explore Math
- Career Day with community professionals and reflection sheets
- Job Shadowing and tours
- Guest Speakers

Individual Advising and Goal Setting

- Mentor meetings, quarterly check-ins to review interests and goals – FLEX
- Update ACP goals and review 4-year plan – FLEX and Badger Meetings
- Parent/Guardian Meetings biannually, share results of Xello inventories and career exploration – FLEX, Badger Meetings, Conferences

9–12 ACP Structure

Career Ready Components

- Resume (Grade 11)
- Cover Letter (Grade 11)
- Mock Interview (Grade 12)
- Letters of Recommendation (Grade 12)
- Postsecondary Plan (Grade 12)

- Direct Admit Wisconsin participation
- Portfolio Presentation

Assessment Components

- PreACT Secure (Grades 9 & 10)
- ACT (Grade 11)
- ASVAB
- STAR Math & Reading

Career Exploration Activities

- Niagara Career Day
- Manufacturing Day
- NWTC Woodland Tour
- UPCC Trades Career Fair
- Northwoods Consortium Youth Apprenticeship ([link](#))
- Internship (syllabus), formerly School to Work
- Job Shadowing
- College Visits

Volunteer Requirement

- 10 hours per year (Grades 9–12)

WCRS Alignment Examples

- Science → LRN.1.C (application of knowledge)
- English → LIF.2.B (communication)
- Social Studies → CAR.2.A (career research & labor market awareness)
- CTE → CAR.4.C (employability skills)

CTE Courses Offered:

- <https://www.niagara.k12.wi.us/schools/high/cte-courses-offered.cfm>

CAREER READINESS/ACP SOFTWARE TOOL

The district utilizes **Xello**, a web-based career exploration and planning tool.

Xello includes:

- Career & Skill Assessments
- 4-Year Planning Tools

- Postsecondary Planning
- Financial Aid Information
- Employment Readiness Tools
- Digital Portfolio (My Plan)

Students use Xello to:

- Complete interest inventories
- Research careers
- Explore career clusters
- Track goals
- Build portfolio artifacts

Teachers integrate Xello into coursework to support career research projects and presentations (LRN.4.C).

Ensuring Equity and Access

INDIVIDUALIZED ACP SUPPORT

Support includes:

- FLEX Advisor mentorship
- School Counselor meetings
- Mentor Agreements
- Personal Goal Sheets
- Learning Style Assessments Reviewed and reassessed at the beginning of each school year and revisited with FLEX advisors throughout the year.
- Personal Skills Assessments Reviewed and reassessed at the beginning of each school year and revisited with FLEX advisors throughout the year.

Inclusive practices ensure students see how their unique identities and talents align with career pathways (LIF.3.C cultural perspectives).

ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

If a pupil is a child with a disability, the ACP is made available to the student's IEP team. The team may incorporate ACP goals into transition planning services.

Additional support:

- ASVAB option
- Direct Admit Wisconsin
- Dual credit opportunities

- Work-Based Learning placements
- CNA Certification and Vocational Certifications
- Transition Services

All ACP components are accessible to pupils with IEP through universal activities.

Career Pathways: Align Preparation with Real-World Outcomes

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

The district utilizes Wisconsin labor market information to inform program development and ensure alignment with high-demand careers.

Primary resource:

Job Center of Wisconsin – Wisconsin County Profiles

Labor market data informs:

- CTE programming expansion
- Welding, Automation, Healthcare offerings
- Youth Apprenticeship placements
- Post-secondary partnerships

Students explore labor market trends through Xello and classroom career research projects aligned to WCRS Career Ready standards.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The ACP program at Niagara ensures every student is prepared for life after high school regardless of pathway.

Career Pathway Programs

- Welding
- Automation
- Robotics
- Health Occupations
- Building Trades
- Marketing/Entrepreneurship
- Pre-Engineering
- Automotive

Dual Credit & Postsecondary Partnerships

- NWTC Courses
- Bay College Courses
- UW Online Courses
- Rising Phoenix Program (UWGB)

Partner Institutions

- Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
- University of Wisconsin–Green Bay
- Bay College

Work-Based Learning Programs

- Youth Apprenticeship
- School-to-Work
- Job Shadowing
- Work Based Learning Course

Industry-Recognized Credentials

- CNA Certification
- A+ Certification
- Network Certification
- Welding Certification
- Automation/PLC Certifications

CTE courses offered and viewed in this handbook:

<https://www.niagara.k12.wi.us/schools/high/cte-courses-offered.cfm>

College prep and employability k-12 SEL ACP CTE guidance

Building School and Community Connections

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF

The School District of Niagara supports staff engagement in ACP through:

- Training in Xello integration
- Career readiness portfolio expectations
- Work-Based Learning coordination

- WCRS alignment training

Frequency

- Teachers engage in LIF.4.C Team Building, CAR.3.C Updating Career Plans

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The district engages families by:

- Informing parents annually about ACP services through posted plans and communication through parent square
- Providing portfolio presentation opportunities
- Sharing progress updates via Skyward
- Hosting career and college events
- Parents are invited to ACP events through Parent Square Communication
- Conferences with parents to review ACP individual plans are arranged yearly and reviewed at regular parent teacher conferences

Parents are encouraged to participate in career discussions aligned to CAR.3.A and communication standards (LIF.2.B).

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The School District of Niagara partners with:

- Local manufacturers
- Healthcare providers
- Trades organizations
- Technical colleges
- Community service organizations

Career-Based Learning Experiences include:

- Career Day
- Manufacturing Day
- Job Shadows
- Youth Apprenticeships
- School-to-Work placements

Most recent date of board review and approval: March 18, 2026