

Career Guidance Washington FAQs

Career Guidance Washington is a guidance and life planning guidance curriculum for students in Grades 6-12. It is designed to help students be what they dream. Specifically, career guidance activities have been designed to help students:

- Develop clear plans for what they would like to do with their lives after high school
- Learn what they need to accomplish today-while they are still in school-to reach those dreams

Career guidance operates on the premise that every student deserves help and attention, not just those who are high risk or high achieving. With career guidance activities, no student is invisible: every student has the support of a caring adult at school. The curriculum can be accessed from the [High School and Beyond Planning](#) web page and is free to all public middle and high schools in our state.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the elements of a Career Guidance program?

A career guidance program is composed of Elements that work together to engage students, teachers, and families alike.

1. **Student Advisory**
Students meet regularly in a small group with an educator-advisor (a teacher or other school staff member). Students typically stay with the same advisor and group until the transition to a new school or graduate. To keep advisories structured and easy to implement, the Washington State Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) has developed a full curriculum for Grades 6-12 that is based on academic and guidance standards.
2. **High School and Beyond Plan**
Students in career guidance use lessons and templates to develop their High School & Beyond Plan.
3. **Student-Led Conference**
Each year, students share their achievements, dreams, and plans with their advisors and families at a conference the student leads. The conference is tied to course registration, involving families in their students' academic plans.
4. **Student-Driven Scheduling**
Students who take advanced, dual credit, or Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses in high school do better after graduation. Career guidance encourages students to take the challenging courses they need for their postsecondary plans and then offers the resources to help them succeed.



5. **Data Collection**

Schools can collect data on a number of different indicators to measure student success. Early results show that students who fully participate in a guidance curriculum program take more advanced courses, graduate at higher rates, and are more likely to pursue a college degree or industry certification.

6. **Program Management**

Implementation of a career guidance program is central to the career and college readiness mission of the school and is recommended as a component of the school improvement plan (SIP). The program leadership team should include an administrator, counselor, and teacher(s) who meet on a regular basis to collaborate program planning and implementation using data analysis.

7. **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling**

This curriculum emerged from the efforts to develop a comprehensive guidance and counseling program (CGCP). Such programs provide sound context for the development and management of this career guidance model and meet the expectation for RCW 28A.600.045.

Is career guidance based on standards?

Yes. Career Guidance is based on both academic and guidance standards. Each lesson plan is based on:

- Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) with Grade Level Expectation level of specificity
- American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model Standards in the areas of personal and social, career, and/or academic development
- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for career and college readiness

This curriculum aligns with the WA School Counselor Standards under the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB).

How are career guidance lessons taught?

Career guidance lessons have been designed to be taught in regular "advisory" sessions. Advisory, homeroom, or classroom sessions usually meet two or more times a month for 25-35 minutes. An advisory consists of a teacher or other school staff member and a small group of students. Students stay with the same advisory group until they transition to another school or graduate. Schools typically operate on a schedule that allows advisory to meet two or more days a week. The Career Guidance Washington curriculum provides many lesson plans for each grade level from Grades 6-12. These lesson plans provide easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions for advisory sessions. Each lesson packet includes:

- A one-page lesson plan with lesson goals, a list of needed materials, a summary of classroom activities, and information about students' work products
- Ready-to-copy student handout(s)

The lessons provide a complete Scope & Sequence for that year's lessons, information on the outcomes students will achieve through the career guidance lessons, and suggestions for advisors on supplemental activities and resources for students and their families for the development of the High School & Beyond Plan.

How do I access the career guidance curriculum?

A list of all of the lessons is available here: [Inventory of Lesson Titles](#)

All public Washington middle and high schools have the opportunity for all career guidance lessons that can be accessed by requesting the printable lessons through this link: [OSPI Lesson Request form website](#).

What topics do the lessons cover?

Each advisory session is based around a theme. These themes repeat each year to help organize the curriculum and to help students retain and build on what they are learning. Typical themes include:

- **Setting Goals.** At the beginning of each school year, students are supported to set goals for themselves in three areas: for what they will achieve academically that year; for how they will make progress in exploring careers and their dreams for the future; and for how they will grow personally, as an involved member of their school and community.
- **Improving Academically.** Each year, students have a number of opportunities to review their academic performance, reflect on the factors that have affected their performance (for good or bad), and then make plans to improve. Students use their High School & Beyond Plan, a graduation requirement, to keep track of their progress and make a plan for graduation and postsecondary options.
- **Building Community.** Research shows that students who are engaged in school do better academically and are less likely to drop out. Therefore, guidance activities devote time to helping students exhibit citizenship by joining activities at school, participating in a volunteer service at school and in the community, and becoming leaders within their schools. The advisory group gives students a "home base" at school in which they can feel that people know and care about them.
- **Planning for Life After High School.** Students have a number of opportunities through advisories to assess their interests and skills and learn about careers that might be interesting to them. Developing their High School & Beyond Plan and/or the senior culminating project helps students plan for their future, starting in middle school.
- **Exploring Careers.** Students learn about different careers and identify the career clusters that seem right for them. The curriculum is integrated with Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses and programs, so that students can learn about the resources and opportunities available in middle school and high school to help them prepare for the future.
- **Using Money.** One of the biggest reasons young people have to drop out of college is because they run out of money. Career guidance lessons helps middle and high school

students learn the basics of managing money and how to develop a financial plan for how they will afford their college and career choices for life after high school.

- **Planning for Next Year.** Students in middle school start to create their High School Plan about what they hope to achieve during high school. Students who are already in high school create and update a Four-year Course Plan as a part of their High School & Beyond Plan each year to plan for the courses they should take-focusing on advanced, dual credit, and CTE opportunities-to be prepared for their dream career.

How does career guidance help students focus on the future?

As part of advisory classes, students are asked to develop a number of different plans for the future each year. By thinking carefully about different aspects of their goals for the future, students learn how to connect what they are doing now to what they hope to achieve and then have the incentive to do better in school. Career guidance plans include:

- Goals for each grade level, prepared at the beginning of the school year for the year ahead
- Plans for contributing citizenship by joining activities at school, exhibiting leadership at school, and participating in volunteer service opportunities
- An "academic inventory," which is a plan for academic improvement, prepared after reviewing first quarter grades
- Postsecondary and career plans based on students' goals and dreams
- Financial plans focused on how to budget, use, and save money
- A course plan to help guide the student in terms of the classes they need to take in high school and focused around high school graduation requirements and college admission requirements
- The High School & Beyond Plan, which allows students to think carefully about what they will do after graduation, is the basis for these lessons (Note that the High School & Beyond Plan is required to graduate in WA)

How do career guidance activities help organize student work?

Each advisory class session refers students to their portfolios, which help develop their plans and are records of their accomplishments and self-reflection in school. Portfolios can be paper or electronic collections of student work. They include samples of students' work, grades, test and assessment results, educational and career plans, community service records, honors or awards they've received, and notes from their student-led conferences.

Each guidance lesson includes time for students to review and update their portfolios. To help students organize their work, the portfolio can have three sections:

- **Academic Development.** This section of the High School & Beyond Plan includes students' grades and transcript information, test and assessment results, and a

connection to state assessment. It also includes the plans students develop for their academic performance each year.

- **Career Development.** This section of the portfolio includes research students do on careers that interest them, as well as their resumes and information about any summer or part-time jobs they hold while they are in school.
- **Personal and Social Development.** This section documents students' involvement in activities at school and their volunteer service at school and in the community. It includes information on school clubs and sports students are part of, volunteer service they have completed either individually or as part of a group, and other extracurricular activities, such as select sports teams, music or drama ensembles, or clubs. It also includes information about the student-led conference each student is asked to organize each year for his or her family and advisor.

How does Career Guidance WA help meet graduation requirements?

The Career Guidance WA curriculum can help students meet the Washington State graduation requirements for graduation from high school. Students' work throughout the middle and high school years will be saved and organized in their High School & Beyond Plan. The end result will help students meet their graduation requirements as follows:

- **High School & Beyond Plan.** Each year, as part of the guidance students complete worksheets on their accomplishments to date and their plans for life after high school. These worksheets help students prepare a full High School & Beyond Plan during senior year. This plan, which is required for graduation, helps students think carefully about what they want to do after high school and what they are doing right now to prepare. By the time they are seniors, students' High School & Beyond Plans are clear descriptions of their plans and include a financial plan, as well as an academic and career plan. The High School and Beyond Plan meets the State of Washington's high school graduation requirements, which became a requirement in 2009.
- **Credit Requirements.** The guidance lessons help students regularly check their credits and plan the courses they must take-not just to meet the requirements to graduate from high school but also to be prepared for the requirements of their postsecondary pathway choice for 4-year colleges, 2-year colleges, technical colleges, industry standard certificate programs, apprenticeship programs, internships, military training, or on-the-job training.
- **In 2017 specific elements were required under ESHB 2224:**
 - Starts in 7th or 8th Grade.
 - Identification of career goals, aided by a skills and career interest inventory assessment.
 - Identification of educational goals.
 - Four-year plan for course-taking that fulfills state and local graduation requirements and aligns with the student's career and educational goals with an individualized Personalized Pathway for students in Class of 2019 and beyond.

- Resume or activity log by end of 12th grade that provides a written compilation of any activities/athletics, leadership opportunities, work experience, or community service that can be used for writing personal statements, application essays, or scholarship applications.
- For students who have not met standards on state assessments; interventions and academic support, courses, or both that enable students to meet the high school graduation requirements must be a part of this plan.
- **The High School & Beyond Plan** is used to guide student middle school and high school experience and prepare him or her for postsecondary education or training and career.
 - After the plan is initiated for each student during the seventh or eighth grade, it is updated each year to reflect high school assessments, review of transcripts, and assess progress toward identified goals.
 - In many cases the plan is revised as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs and to identify the available interventions and academic support, and/or courses.

What is the High School and Beyond Plan?

The High School & Beyond Plan revolves around three questions: Who am I?, What can I become?, and How do I become that? The High School & Beyond Plan, a graduation requirement, helps students get the most out of high school and think about their future. Students work with school counselors and advisors to create their own individual plan, the "personalized pathway," throughout high school and revise their plan annually to accommodate changing interests or postsecondary goals on what they expect to do the year following graduation from high school. The postsecondary aspirations may include pathways for application to four-year colleges or universities, two-year community or technical colleges, apprenticeship programs, industry standard certificate programs, military training, or on-the-job training.

How do Career Guidance WA lessons help students focus on academics?

A significant part of each year in career guidance programs is to help students focus on academics: staying on track by taking the needed courses; reviewing grades and assessment results; developing plans for academic improvement; and a plan to take advanced, dual credit, and CTE courses in middle school, high school, and beyond. Career guidance helps students reflect on their academic performance and then plan for the future. Students are encouraged to improve their academic performance based on their strengths and weaknesses. Students are given information about the coursework required for their chosen pathway and then urged to enroll in courses that align with their plan and in rigorous advanced, dual credit, and/or CTE courses that are vital to postsecondary success. Students are frequently asked to make connections between what they are currently learning and how they will use those skills after high school.

How and why does career guidance focus on community?

Career guidance programs help students focus on community-building by getting involved in sports, clubs, and leadership activities at school; engaging in volunteer service in the community; helping younger students; and participating in activities as a member of an advisory group. Becoming involved in a community, learning to be of service, and learning how to lead are all lifelong skills that will benefit students no matter what their chosen academic or career paths. In addition, research shows that students who are engaged in school activities do better academically and are less likely to drop out. The guidance curriculum helps students become involved in school activities and exhibit good citizenship at school and in the community.

How does career guidance focus on careers?

The guidance curriculum is fully integrated with Career & Technical Education (CTE) and includes time each year to help students investigate career options. Each year, the curriculum features a number of advisory lessons that are focused on exploring careers. These sessions help students learn more about their interests and skills and then help them learn about career opportunities and the education and training they'll need to pursue these opportunities. The lesson plans suggest that each student take an interest or skills assessment once a year. The lesson plans also suggest career interviews and job shadows for older students to give them firsthand experience in a career area that interests them. Students also learn about the CTE courses and programs available at their school or within their district, including classes, skill centers, dual credit, and other opportunities.

What are the best resources for school districts to make a High School & Beyond Plan using Career Guidance WA?

1. [OSPI's Career Guidance WA guidance curriculum for grades 6-12](#)
2. [Washington state Graduation Requirements](#)
3. [State Board of Education](#)
4. [WSIPC High School & Beyond Planner](#)