



The Role of School Counselors in Advancing Career Pathways

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Welcome!

Ice Breaker

If I could give my younger self one piece of career advice, it would be...



Why this topic Matters?

- Counselors are central to academic, career, and SEL growth
- Career pathways improve postsecondary outcomes
- Equity-focused advising is critical

Resource: [Preparing HS Counselors to Support Career Readiness for All](#)



School Counselors as Key Drivers of Student Success



ACADEMIC GROWTH

Implement comprehensive programs supporting academic achievement.



CAREER GROWTH

Guide students to connect school learning to real-world careers.



SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL GROWTH

Foster social and emotional well-being for all students.



REAL-WORLD CAREERS & POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS

Ensuring every student is prepared for their future.

Definition of Career Pathways

What Are Career Pathways?

A sequence of courses and experiences that enable students to explore career interests, build skills, and transition into postsecondary education and the workforce.

- They help students connect school learning to real-world careers and post-secondary success.

Includes **dual credit / CTE / work-based learning / apprenticeships**.

Integrated within the PaCE Framework to align college and career readiness across the State of Illinois.

Illinois Career Readiness Context

PaCE Framework



Guides career development



Require postsecondary education

College AND Career Readiness



College Readiness

Career Readiness

Emphasis on both

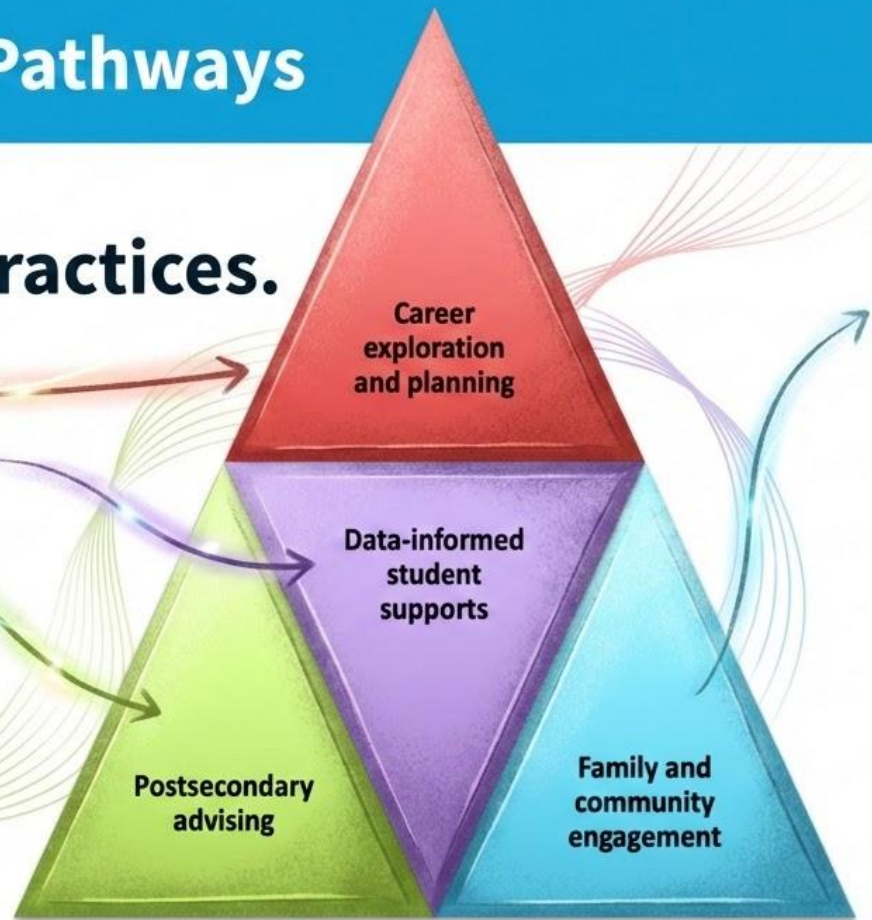
The Counselor's Role



Counselor Roles in Career Pathways

Use data to support your practices.

1. Career Exploration 
2. Family and Community Resources 
3. Post-secondary options 



<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Standards-Positions/Position-Statements/ASCA-Position-Statements/The-School-Counselor-and-Career-Development>

Impact of Counseling Programming

- ✓ More engaged students
- ✓ Better academic and career outcomes
- ✓ Stronger equity
- ✓ Clearer futures
- ✓ Stronger communities

Rich Township Snapshot



Enrollment: Approximately 2,200 students(2 Campuses)

Graduation Rate: 91%

FOT Rate: 95.1%

Future Ready Programs: AP, IB, Dual Credit Courses within CTE Pathways (Academy Model - Smaller schools) 86% Seniors Successful in Future Ready

RTHS Counselors: 9 School Counselors and 2 College & Career Coordinators

Rich Township High School District 227 Pathways



Business & Finance

- Business
- Finance
- Marketing
- Accounting
- Entrepreneurship
- Legal & Law



Fine Arts & Communications

- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
- Audio/Visual Broadcasting
- TV/Cinema Production



International Baccalaureate (IB)

- MYP (Middle Years Programme)
- DP (Diploma Programme)



Rich Township High School District 227 Pathways



Health & Human Services

- Health Sciences (CCPE)
**Approved Career Pathway Endorsement*
- Early Childhood Ed
- General Teaching
- Legal & Law



Agricultural Science

- Plant Science
- Veterinary Science



Technology & Engineering

- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Mechatronics & Automation
- Aviation
- Automotive
- Engineering & Energy (PLTW)



Computer & Information Technology

- Computer Science
- Cyber Security



Transportation & Automotive

- Automotive Technology
- Electronics



Rich Township High School District 227- Career Guidance

Self-Discovery: Set a Purpose & Explore Careers

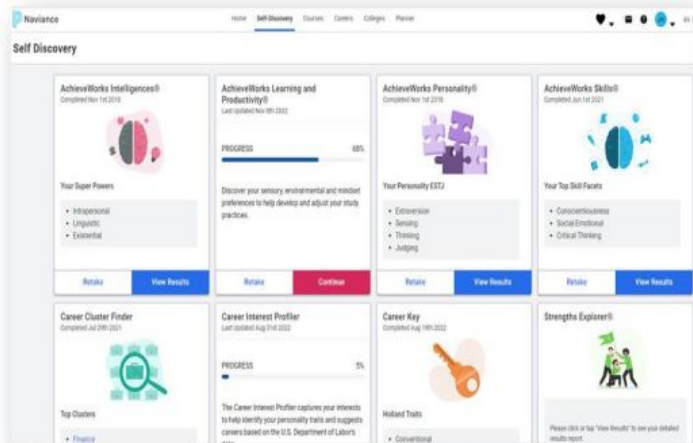
All Assessments below provide students with careers and pathways of best fit

Start with discovering **strengths**:

- Intelligences
- Personality
- Skills
- Strengths Explorer
- Learning & Productivity

And **interests**:

- Career Cluster Finder
- Career Interest Profiler
- Career Key



Rich Township High School District 227- Career Guidance

Career Cluster Finder Questions

The interface displays two screens of activities for the Career Cluster Finder. Each screen has a title 'Career Cluster Finder' and a progress indicator. The first screen shows two activity cards: 'Learn how things grow and stay alive' and 'Follow logical, step-by-step procedures'. The second screen shows two activity cards: 'Work with computer programs' and 'Be involved in politics'. Each card has a 'DISLIKE' button and a 'LIKE' button.

Career Cluster Finder Sample Report

The interface displays a sample report for the Career Cluster Finder. It includes a 'Summary' section and a 'Your Top 4 Cluster Matches' section. The 'Summary' section states: 'This report displays National Career Clusters that are a best fit for you based on your interests and personal qualities from when you took this assessment. National Career Clusters are a framework that organizes careers into Clusters and Pathways. These often align to academic programs and majors at schools and post-secondary institutions.' The 'Your Top 4 Cluster Matches' section states: 'Naviance provides your top scoring matches based on what you entered about your interests.' Below this is a 'Table of Contents' with a 'Summary' link and 'Previous' and 'Next' navigation buttons.

The interface displays a 'Career Cluster Ranking' section. It includes a list of career clusters and their corresponding scores. The table is as follows:

Career Cluster	Score
Finance	9
Health Science	9
Human Services	9
Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	8
Architecture and Construction	8
Business Management and Administration	8
Education and Training	8
Government and Public Administration	8

Below the table is a 'Table of Contents' section with a 'Career Clus...' link and 'Previous' and 'Next' navigation buttons. The bottom of the interface shows the URL 'student.naviance.com'.



Rich Township High School District 227-

Five Key Attributes RTHS Counselors Support Students

1. Student-Centered Guidance

Career counseling should focus on each student's **interests, strengths, values, and goals**. Counselors personalize guidance rather than using a "one-size-fits-all" approach, helping students see pathways that fit who they are.

2. Career Exploration & Awareness

Effective counselors expose students to a wide range of careers, industries, and postsecondary options (college, trades, military, entrepreneurship).

This includes:

- Career assessments
- Job shadowing
- Guest speakers
- Career fairs
- Labor market information

This helps students make informed decisions.



3. Academic & Career Alignment

Career counseling connects **school performance to future goals**.

Students learn how:

- Course selection
- GPA
- Certifications
- Dual credit

4. Skill Development & Career Readiness

Strong programs help students build **workplace and life skills**, including:

- Resume writing
- Interviewing
- Communication
- Time management
- Professional behavior
- Financial literacy

5. Equity, Advocacy, & Support

Effective career counselors ensure **all students have access** to opportunities, especially those facing barriers. This includes:

Advocating for underrepresented students
Connecting families to resources

Belvidere High School Snapshot

- Belvidere, IL Community
 - Industries: Manufacturing, Auto, Healthcare, Agriculture
- BHS Demographics
 - ~1100 students; majority Hispanic
 - 60% low income
- Achievement data (2024-2025)
 - 84% graduation rate; 90% 9th grade on-track
 - 57% students enrolled in advanced coursework
- BHS Counseling Team
 - 5 generalists; 1 specialist (at-risk students)



D100 Pathway Endorsements

- 14 pathways available
- Approved pathway endorsements include:
 - Manufacturing Career Pathway (METT Endorsement)
 - Automotive Service (METT Endorsement)
 - Network Design & Troubleshooting Career Pathway (IT Endorsement)
 - Education Career Pathway (HPS Endorsement)
 - Certified Nurse Aide (HST Endorsement)
 - Emergency Medical Technician (HST Endorsement)
- Last year: 4 BHS students earned a CCPE (13 total for D100)
- This year: 12 BHS students anticipated to earn a CCPE (33 total for D100)

D100 Pathway Toolbox



Team

- Building: CTE Content Leader and Teachers
- District: Director of CCR and Career Readiness Facilitator
- Community: Boone County Success Network, community partners



Technology

- Google
- SchoolLinks
- eSchool (soon to be Synergy)

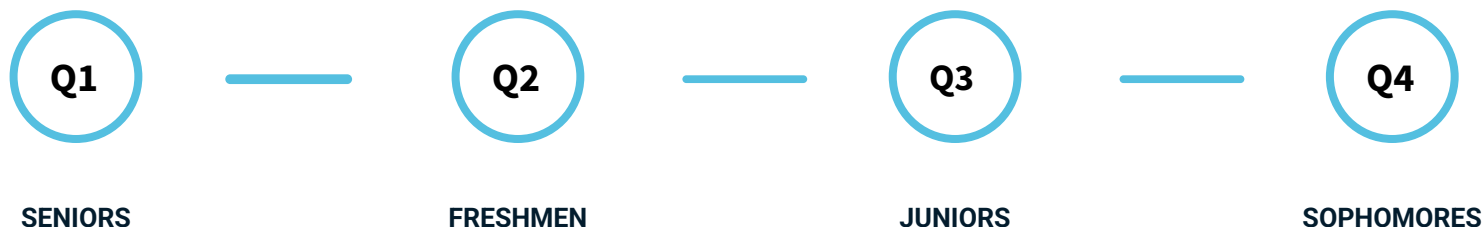


Tools

- Google Forms and Sheets
- D100 Coursebook
- CCPE tracking documents

BHS Current Practices

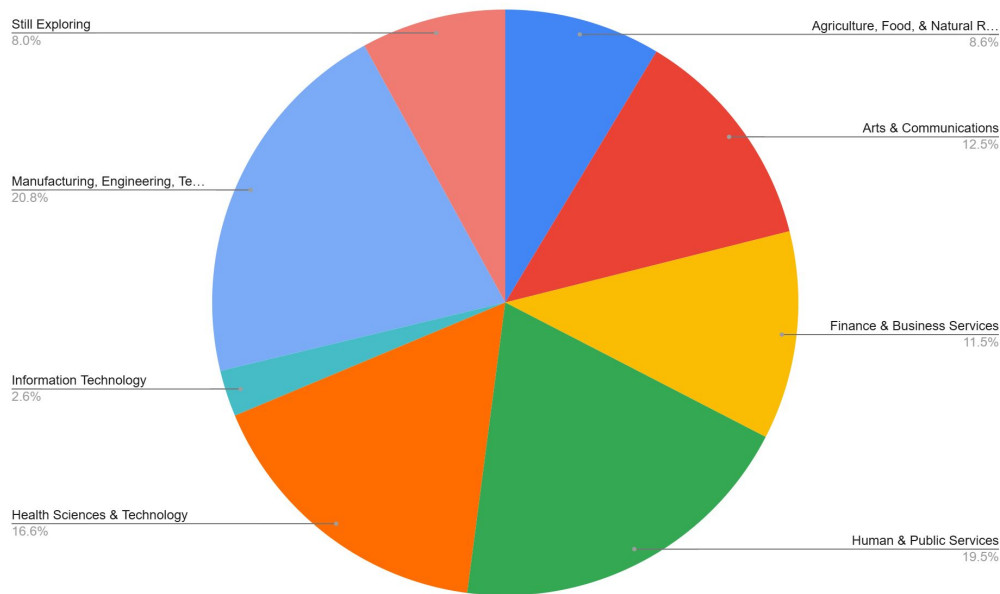
- Grade level 'kick-off' presentations
- Individual postsecondary planning meetings with each student
- SchoolLinks directive; PaCE tracking
- WIN Sessions that highlight specific areas



WIN Session Examples: Financial Aid Process, SchoolLinks Exploration, Undecided Clinic, Intro to the Common App, Navigating the Trades, Entering the WorkForce, Resume Building

BHS Current Practices

- Course Selection Season
 - 9th-11th graders choose endorsement area
 - 8th graders share career interests
- Classes to highlight
 - Career Planning
 - Work-Based Learning
 - Transition English
 - Transition Math



BHS Current Practices

- CCPE progress monitoring
 - Individual student tracking documents
 - Director of CCR email notifications
- Career Readiness Facilitator collaboration
 - Internships, job shadows, visits, bringing partners into schools
 - Connecting students with learning opportunities and jobs
- Behind-the-scenes work to make sure opportunities are available

On the Horizon for BHS

- New SIS allowing us to integrate everything
- Utilizing more capabilities of SchoolLinks
 - Parent/guardian involvement
 - Opportunity board
- More internship opportunities
- More approved pathway endorsements

On the Horizon for BHS



New SIS allowing us to integrate everything



More **internship opportunities**



Utilizing more capabilities of **SchoolLinks**



Parent/guardian involvement



Opportunity board



More approved pathway **endorsements**

GUIDING LIGHTS



Counselors have always supported college and career readiness



Student engagement is key



Collaboration creates equity

Counselors & CTE



Counselors and CTE Alignment



Support pathway
enrollment



Promote credentials
and certifications



Connect students to
WBL opportunities

Best Practices for Educators



What's Next...

Measuring Success

- Graduation and on-track rates
- Postsecondary enrollment
- Credential attainment
- Equitable access

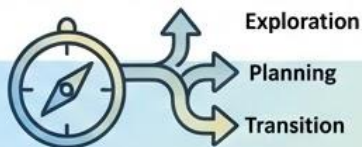
Call to Action

- Strengthen collaboration
- Use [data](#) intentionally
- Expand career exposure
- Center student voice

Turn & Talk



How are career pathways currently reinforced through **instruction** and student support?



Where do students most often need guidance: exploration, planning, or transition?



What routines could strengthen counselor–teacher collaboration around PaCE benchmarks?

Key Takeaways



- Collaboration between counselors and teachers is crucial for student success.



- PaCE checklists provide a structured framework for career guidance.



- Regular, embedded career conversations strengthen student readiness.

Key Takeaways

Most careers are built through exploration, flexibility, and persistence—not perfect planning.

[Use this resource to find relevant research related to CTE and Post-secondary outcomes](https://studentportal.isac.org/student-resources/PACEStudentChecklist.pdf)

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