



# FEDERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## Purpose

The U.S. education system does not equitably graduate enough high school students prepared to achieve success in postsecondary education or the labor market. We propose a bold redesign of high school featuring seamless and better supported transitions into postsecondary education and careers.

This initiative recognizes that education is not one-size-fits-all; our current education system is too siloed and disjointed; and high school is not well aligned with postsecondary education and the labor market. Furthermore, the gap between secondary and postsecondary is widest for the students with the greatest need.

There is an urgent need to redesign high school to offer multiple pathways to success for diverse groups of learners that allow students to earn degrees and credentials with labor market value beyond a traditional high school diploma, leading to wealth-generating employment and career advancement. This need is particularly critical for students from low-resource families and communities and those facing instructional loss due to COVID-19.

## Concept

Funding to states to empower states and districts to redesign their secondary education systems so that high school students have greater, more equitable access to portable, personalized postsecondary experiences and pathways in high school that lead to the attainment of degrees and credentials directly transferable to success in higher education, the workforce, and civic life.

## Funding Mechanism

Funding to State Education Agencies (SEAs) to distribute to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), with the option to use a portion of funds for statewide initiatives. State grants will be awarded competitively or by formula, depending on the size of appropriation available. Based on

available funding, grants should be of sufficient size and scope to affect real policy change in participating states.

## Goals

- Redesign traditional high school structures (when, where, and how students learn) to make the educational program more engaging, personalized, relevant, and effective in creating momentum towards postsecondary success
- Increase postsecondary access and completion for historically underrepresented and marginalized students
- Allow students to graduate high school with a postsecondary degree or credential that is portable and aligned to their academic and career interests and/or graduate high school and begin such a postsecondary pathway early
- Develop and strengthen partnerships between secondary, postsecondary, workforce systems, and employers to expand college and career experiences, exposure, and integrated pathways for students
- Increase access to postsecondary experiences and pathways that bridge the transition from high school to college and career

## Encouraged Use of Funds

Grantees are encouraged to use funds to support redesign goals in any or multiple of the following areas:

- Statewide, intra- and inter-district opportunities for students to access advanced and specialized courses and programs, including college in high school programs
- Experiences outside of the traditional classroom (e.g. internships, apprenticeships, service projects, and other work-based and experiential learning opportunities) that advance students' postsecondary plans

- Partnerships with two- and four-year institutions of higher education and employers, including but not limited to college in high school programs, as well as with NGOs and other intermediaries (e.g. Area Technical Centers)
- Integration of college and career pathways leading to transferable degrees and/or portable, stackable credentials
- Changes to how instructional time is defined as well as changes to the academic calendar, including the summer term, and the school day, to better meet the needs of students in the 21st century
- Changes to the traditional grade level system, such as options for students to finish high school graduation requirements before the 12th grade and begin their postsecondary pathway early; leave high school with a degree or credential; remain in high school for a 13th year as long as there is a clear path to a degree or credential by graduation; and move at their own pace and earn credit based on proficiency or mastery rather than seat time through a competency based model
- Targeted use of virtual and/or hybrid instruction to increase access to high-quality, advanced, and specialized programming
- Investment in technology and broadband infrastructure to improve accessibility for students and schools with limited or no connectivity
- Navigational supports and advising services that maximize student success and ease the transition from secondary to postsecondary learning environments
- Funding of LEA consortia to offer coordinated programming
- High school graduation requirements
- Grading, credit, and promotion policies
- Assessments
- Advanced or specialized course/program eligibility criteria
- CTE program approval and instructor certification
- Blended K12 and higher education funding streams to achieve system-wide integration
- Expanded teacher pipelines, such as routes to certification and upskilling for qualified instructors for postsecondary pathway programs in high school (including CTE)
- Statewide transfer agreements and policies within higher education
- Portability and stackability of career pathways and credentials aligned to CTE program approval
- Work with higher education institutions (including teacher education programs), state education agencies, and regional accreditors to redesign undergraduate and graduate programs to create longer-term staffing solutions to facilitate scaling of redesigned high school programs
- Policies to facilitate transferability of credits (e.g. common course numbering, transcription policies)
- Integration of funding streams for workforce development, secondary education, and postsecondary education

### Encouraged Policy and Systemic Changes

Grantees are encouraged to restructure systems, change regulations, and/or request federal waivers to accomplish redesign goals, including in the following areas:

- Seat time requirements
- Course sequencing

### Application

- Ensuring students graduate with more than a high school diploma (e.g. college or career experiences, credits, degrees or credentials), with demonstration of mastery of knowledge and skills aligned to postsecondary success
- Commitment to equity, including priority for low-income and at-risk students and high-need, low-resourced districts
- Commitment and plan for robust evaluation of policy and programmatic changes

- Commitment and plan to sustaining and scaling promising and effective programming and policy changes district- and state-wide
- Commitment to innovation within the traditional grade 9–16 system
- Partnerships with IHEs, employers, NGOs and/or other intermediaries (e.g. Area Technical Centers)
- Note: LEA Consortia applications are allowable, with State approval