

THE SHIFTS FOR ARIZONA COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS EDUCATION SHOULD **AMPLIFY**...

Integration of practical experiences into the classroom and educational journey.

Recognizing the importance of early exposure to career concepts, Arizona introduced the Career Awareness Standards for Grades K-5 (Updated in December 2024) these standards aim to prepare students for middle school career exploration by equipping them with knowledge and skills pertinent to various career pathways.

Personalized Education Career Action Plans (ECAPs) in grades 9-12, that outline a student's coursework, career aspirations, and extended learning opportunities, fostering a tailored approach to education that aligns with individual goals and career interests.

Rigorous academics with locally vetted CTE assessment standards to confer certificates that employers recognize as valid indicators of student qualifications. This alignment ensures that students acquire both academic knowledge and technical skills necessary for success in specific industries, bridging the gap between education and career.

Collaboration with workforce initiatives.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS EDUCATION SHOULD **MINIMIZE**...

Academic isolation - where an educational approach is disconnected from real-world relevance, practical application, or future planning.

An educational approach that neglects leaving students unprepared for life beyond the classroom. Without intentional early exposure to real-world skills and career concepts, students miss valuable opportunities to explore interest, build purpose and connect learning to their future.

A standardized, one-size fits all approach where a students follow the same fixed curriculum with little regard for their individual interests, career goals, or learning needs. This model offers minimal flexibility, rarely incorporates student agency, and provides limited or no guidance for connecting coursework to real-world experiences or postsecondary pathways.

An academic model that separates core academics from career preparation, offering limited or no access to CTE, and lacking alignment with local workforce needs.

An insular education system that operates in isolation from the labor market, where schools make little to no effort to engage with local employers, industry partners, and/or workforce development initiatives.



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COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS EDUCATION SHOULD INVOLVE LESS...

Siloed, outdated instructional models where core subjects are taught in isolation, focused heavily on rote memorization and standardized testing.

Making decisions without evidence or measurable outcomes.

Disconnected approaches where families are left out of the educational planning process, receiving limited communication and playing little to no role in shaping their child's academic or postsecondary path. Planning should not happen in isolation led solely by schools.

Education models that delay or ignore early career awareness and self-exploration, treating these as topics reserved for high school.

Classroom experiences limited to textbooks and traditional instruction, with no exposure to the working world or applied learning.

Educational models that limit advanced coursework to a select few, offering little to no access to early college opportunities for all students,

Postsecondary planning that is treated as optional, extracurricular services, or the sole responsibility of the counseling department.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS EDUCATION SHOULD INVOLVE MORE....

Collaboration, digital literacy, creativity, financial literacy, and communication embedded into all content areas.

Use of data to guide opportunity and improvement.

Informed family partnerships in student planning.

Career conversations and identity exploration starting in K-5.

Introduction of career days, local business community guest speakers, and project-based learning exploration of different industries.

Expanded opportunities and access to early college programs like Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment

Financial aid, financial literacy, ECAP, and pathway planning workshops embedded into economic and government classes for all seniors.

