MAKING CAREER PATHWAYS VISIBLE

AUDITING DISTRICT CAREER GUIDES AND WEBSITES TO MOVE FROM REFLECTION TO AN INTENTIONAL DESIGN APPROACH.

A LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP FOR DISTRICT TEAMS

SCSC
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Quality Through Cooperation Since 1976

9:00 am- 12:00 pm

September 2026

WHO IS IN THIS ROOM?

Please Share:

Name & Role in your school district

School District team you represent

A single word that describes the start of this school year



Key Reflection: It is the adults and influential educators who connect students to opportunities. What resources do we give them to support students?

"EVERY STUDENT DESERVES A PATHWAY THEY CAN SEE, UNDERSTAND, AND CONFIDENTLY NAVIGATE."

SCSC Career Pathways Leadership Toolkit

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OVERVIEW OF THE TOOLKIT

1. SEE: Understand Reality

Rather than introducing another heavy initiative, this toolkit builds on the strong work already happening in your schools.

We begin by examining our current communication materials, registration guides, and websites through a critical, objective lens.

2. DESIGN: Intentional Systems

Shift from accidental communication to intentional design choices that serve every learner.

By applying 5 core design principles, district teams craft clearer pathways, remove hidden barriers, and map meaningful experiences.

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The Leadership Cycle

GATHER

Invite key influencers across your district—counselors, CTE leads, admin, communications, and partners who shape pathway decisions.

DISCUSS

Use reflection tools to examine current reality, celebrate strengths, surface gaps, and build a unified understanding across roles.

ACT

Leave with 1-3 clear commitments and high-impact design moves that propel your district forward.

TOOL #1: VISIBILITY AUDIT

Step 1: Individual Audit

Reflect & Rate (Page 9)

Work individually to rate your district across 6 dimensions on a scale of 1 to 5:

- Awareness
- Understanding
- Navigation
- Experiences
- Partnerships
- Management

Step 2: Team Dialogue

Discuss Evidence (Pages 10-14)

Discuss rationale behind your ratings with your team.

Examine existing communication materials and evidence to validate ratings and identify areas of alignment or disagreement.

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5 Design Principles

1

STUDENTS CAN SEE THEMSELVES

Representation and belonging in every pathway.

2

STUDENTS KNOW THEIR NEXT STEP

Clear course progressions and timely guidance.

3

STUDENTS UNDERSTAND WHY LEARNING MATTERS

Connect daily coursework to future career goals.

4

FAMILIES CAN FIND THEIR WAY

Accessible, clear, multi-language communication.

5

PATHWAYS LEAD SOMEWHERE

Direct ties to postsecondary credentials & careers.

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FROM REFLECTION TO ACTION

#1

High Impact Focus

Focusing Your Team's Action

Auditing is only the beginning. The value comes from translating insights into concrete design changes.

- Review your team's score patterns on **Page 9**
- Identify top priorities on **Page 15** that will make the biggest immediate impact for students
- Assign clear leads and realistic timelines for implementation

AUDITING REGISTRATION GUIDES

Examine local and regional registration guides with 4 critical questions:

- **"How many clicks does it take?"** Is information easy to find from your district home page, or hidden behind menus?
- **Can students & families see themselves?** Are there engaging student stories, diverse imagery, and welcoming language?
- **Is it usable and helpful?** Can a 9th grader or parent quickly understand course sequences and options?
- **Are career pathways highlighted?** Do course listings explicitly connect to regional careers, credentials, and wages?

REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE EXAMPLES

tinyurl.com/4c3d9ysp

TOOL #2: GUIDE DESIGN AUDIT

Think Like a Designer

Observe. Gather Evidence. Look for Patterns.

Before redesigning any document or website, examine what is currently present—and what is missing.

Use Pages 20–23 of your toolkit to document evidence from your district's registration guide.



INTERACTIVE EVIDENCE WALL

Activity Instructions

1. Review & Collect

Examine your district's course guide or scheduling website.

Write specific pieces of **EVIDENCE** on sticky notes (e.g., student quotes, course maps, missing wage data, QR codes)

Wall Setup

2. Categorize & Map

Post your sticky notes under the corresponding 5 Design Principle posters around the room.

Note which resource was referenced and identify emergent patterns across district teams.

From Evidence to Action

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1

REVIEW

Analyze collected sticky notes on the wall.

2

DISCOVER

Identify surprises, trends, and major gaps.

3

SELECT

Choose 2–3 high priority design moves.

4

COMMIT

Document owners, tasks, and timelines.

TOOL #3: STUDENT-CENTERED LENS

Designing Through Student Eyes
Too often, school systems are built for an "average" student who doesn't exist.

Tool #3 uses realistic student scenarios (Alex, Maya, Jordan, Elena, Aaliyah) to surface assumptions, build empathy, and reveal unintended barriers.



TOOL #4: STUDENT JOURNEY MAPPING

Map Current Experiences
Use Tool #4 to plot where students actively engage in career-connected learning across middle and high school grades.

Identify critical transition points where student guidance is strong versus where opportunities drop off.

Identify & Bridge Gaps
Examine equity of access across grade levels, student groups, and academic tracks.

Pinpoint exact moments to embed new experiences, guest speakers, tours, and pathway conversations.

Mapping Student Experiences

EARLY AWARENESS

- 9th Grade Career Navigator
- Tour of Manufacturing
- Career Expos & Assemblies

EXPLORATION

- 10th/11th Career Days
- Construct Tomorrow
- Guest Speakers & Shadows

PREPARATION

- Work-Based Learning
- CTE & Dual Credit Courses
- Credentials & Apprenticeships

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REFLECT AND SHARE OUT

Refine Design Moves
Consider insights from all 4 toolkit exercises and refine your district's immediate design priorities.

Cross-District Exchange
Share key findings with partner districts, gather feedback, and record powerful ideas from regional peers.

From Mapping to Momentum

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Designate clear leaders and cross-functional teams to own each design move.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

Establish 30-day, 60-day, and school-year milestones for updating resources.

HOW DO WE MEASURE PROGRESS?

Define indicators of success—increased student confidence and guide usability.

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HOW SCSC SUPPORTS YOUR TEAM

Current Regional Initiatives: SCSC provides regional alignment, technical assistance, and leadership facilitation.

GTCUW Building a Movement Grants: Planning support for districts (e.g., Madelia Public Schools & United South Central Schools currently planning).

Career Pathway Community of Practice: Regional cohort launching in the 2025–26 school year for ongoing peer collaboration.

QUESTIONS & NEXT STEPS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP IN MAKING CAREER PATHWAYS VISIBLE AND NAVIGABLE FOR ALL STUDENTS!

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