



CIEE: Next Generation Career Pathways

# Understanding Advising Capacity

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The NGCP Promise is that *every Nevada learner—wherever they live—can explore careers early and often, gain real work experience, and graduate with real options*. In December, the NGCP Subcommittee affirmed that one of our three “make yes easy” moves for 2026 is to enable expanded advising capacity—because even the best pathway design fails if learners can’t consistently access guidance, planning support, and navigation into real opportunities. The purpose of this brief is to level-set on what exists in the state and elsewhere (guidance, tools, technology, staffing models) and identify where the gaps are most binding.

### **What this brief is not:**

- Not a prescription for a single statewide model.
- Not an evaluation of any specific district/school/program.
- Not a funding request.
- Not a complete catalog—this is built to be corrected and improved by the Subcommittee and invited operators.

### **Questions to Consider as You Read:**

- Which advising functions should be guaranteed for every student, and who should own each function across counselors, career coaches, CTE staff, WBL coordinators, teachers, and partners?
- How much protected time do schools need for career advising and planning, and what work is currently displacing that time?
- Which parts of the advising landscape create the most friction for staff and students, and what would it take to reduce those frictions?
- What should strong middle school career exposure look like in Nevada, and how should it connect to ninth grade course selection, pathways, and early work based learning exposure?



- What are the most realistic actions for the Commission to recommend, enable, and monitor between now and the next legislative cycle, and which partners must be at the table for implementation?

## Table of Contents

<b>I. Staffing Functions and Common Models</b> .....	<b>4</b>
School Counselors .....	4
Career Coaches .....	5
Work-Based Learning (WBL) Coordinators .....	6
CTE Coordinators.....	7
Classroom teachers and informal site-based roles.....	7
Navigator models (via workforce boards, intermediaries, and nonprofits) .....	8
<b>II. Guidance and Tools</b> .....	<b>8</b>
State and District Guidance Documents.....	8
Pathway Maps and Program of Study Catalogs .....	9
Career Interest Inventories and Student Planning Tools.....	11
Work-Based Learning process tools, forms, and credit guidance.....	12
Workforce system advising supports outside schools .....	13
<b>III. Technology</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Career Exploration Platforms .....	15
Virtual Reality Career Exposure Options .....	16
Employer Matching Platforms and Internship Marketplaces.....	17
Data systems and how opportunities are posted and found .....	18
<b>IV. Most Binding Gaps + Potential Opportunities</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Not enough dedicated time for career advising .....	19



Fragmented tool landscape.....	20
Middle school career exposure .....	21
Rural Access and Transportation .....	21
No common, simple on ramp for students and families.....	22
<b>Appendix - Key Definitions and Acronyms .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## I. Staffing Functions and Common Models

“Advising capacity” is the distribution of functions (career exploration, planning, transitions, work-based learning logistics, employer engagement, case management) across roles, the time protected for those functions, and the systems that let staff do the work efficiently. Typically, districts and schools combine multiple roles (counselors, career coaches, WBL coordinators, CTE leads, teachers, external partners) to deliver a full college and career pathway advising experience.

Typical functions that fall under this umbrella include:

- **Career pathway development:** structured career exploration, interest inventories, goal-setting, pathway awareness, and “what’s possible” exposure.
- **Individual planning & navigation (targeted/intensive for some students):** course planning aligned to pathways, postsecondary transition supports, family engagement, barrier reduction.
- **Opportunity brokerage:** identifying, matching, and placing students into WBL, internships, youth apprenticeship, dual credit, industry credentials, and other career-connected learning experiences.
- **Employer/intermediary relationship management:** recruiting employers, managing agreements, mentor readiness, compliance, and coordination across sites.

The staffing models below reflect the most common ways these functions are delineated and assigned at the role level across different districts and schools. Where available, Nevada-specific data is included to document what staffing models are currently in use (and where), surface pain points, and identify design trade-offs. Much of this information however, has not been collected in aggregate or made publicly available, indicating that further research is needed to document and understand this ecosystem at a state level.



## School Counselors

School counselors are often the “default” advising workforce in middle and high schools, spanning academic advising, career development, and social/emotional supports. Their responsibilities often include academic planning and graduation guidance, career development and postsecondary navigation, and coordination with student support services. The [American School Counselor Association](#) describes this role through a comprehensive school counseling program model that prioritizes direct and indirect services to students and protects counselor time for student focused work. ASCA recommends 250 students per school counselor; nationally the average for 2023–2024 is 376:1, and ASCA links the 250:1 benchmark to the intent that counselors spend ~80% of their time in direct/indirect student services (vs. clerical/administrative duties). Nevada’s 2023–2024 reported student-to-school-counselor ratio is 454:1 (479,574 students; 1,055 counselors), significantly higher than the national average. Using ASCA’s counts, reaching the recommended 250:1 would imply a need for roughly ~1,918 counselors, or ~863 additional counselors statewide ( $479,574 \div 250 - 1,055$ ).

### Implications

At higher ratios, counselors face sharper triage between crisis response/SEL needs, scheduling/graduation compliance, and forward-looking career advising. ASCA explicitly calls out that when counselors are assigned non-counseling duties, advising capacity erodes even if staffing levels are unchanged. Research continues to find relationships between counselor access/ratios and student outcomes; for example, [recent work in New York](#) reports associations between counselor ratios and four-year college enrollment patterns (with more favorable outcomes in lower-ratio contexts).

### Common Counselor-centered staffing configurations:

<b>Model A (Baseline) Counselor-as-primary career advisor</b>	<b>Model B Counselors + counseling assistants/registrar supports (task- shifting).</b>	<b>Model C Counselors + dedicated college/career advisor(s) (specialization).</b>
Career exploration and planning sits inside the counselor role; success depends heavily on ratio, protected time, and availability of tools/curriculum.	Non-licensed staff take on scheduling logistics, transcript/records work, testing coordination, and administrative tasks so counselors can do more advising. (ASCA’s guidance on appropriate vs. inappropriate activities is often used to define what should be shifted.)	A specialized advisor/coach focuses on career exploration, postsecondary transitions, and application/placement processes, while licensed counselors cover academic/SEL responsibilities.



## Career Coaches

A career coach is typically a non-licensed (or differently licensed) role focused on career exploration, career readiness skill-building, and helping students connect “who I am” → “what’s possible” → “what I need to do next.” Coaches are often designed to complement (not replace) counselors by handling universal career exploration and structured planning activities at scale. Nevada [AB539](#) (2025) authorizes (subject to available funds) the Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) to place career coaches in middle schools and junior high schools. The program is intended to provide students career pathway guidance and readiness development (inside/outside the classroom) and is structured to involve collaboration with partners (state/local agencies, districts, chambers, etc.). DETR is responsible for promulgating guidance.

### Common Career Coach staffing patterns:

School-based, full-time career coach (often in larger or specialized secondary schools).	Shared career coach across multiple schools (common in small/rural settings).	Regional career coach positioned in an intermediary or workforce organization (often paired with WBL brokering).
Strength: consistent presence; can run classroom lessons + 1:1 meetings; can develop strong relationships with staff and local employers.	Strength: lower cost per site; challenge is limited time per campus and harder relationship-building.	Strength: employer connections and cross-site coordination; challenge is integration into school culture and data sharing.

### Evidence base: adding dedicated advising capacity can shift outcomes

While many rigorous evaluations are focused on [college](#) advising rather than career exploration per se, the core finding is still relevant for understanding “capacity”: programs that place dedicated advisors/coaches in schools can measurably change student behaviors and outcomes ([applications](#), [enrollment](#)), particularly for historically underserved groups—suggesting that more advising capacity with clear focus can matter.

## Work-Based Learning (WBL) Coordinators

Work-based learning is a layered operational system that includes employer recruitment, student matching, supervision/mentorship, compliance, transportation, schedules/credits, and quality assurance. [Research](#) and guidance on WBL consistently emphasize that successful implementation requires intentional coordination and relationship management, which is difficult to sustain as a



“side of desk” duty. Connecting students to WBL and employers often requires more capacity than schools have and intermediaries/staffing innovations are frequently used to meet demand. WBL coordinators are the bridge between classroom instruction and workplace learning, including employer partnerships (including recruiting and relationship management), student preparation, and oversight/structure/delivery for workplace experiences.

**Common WBL coordinator staffing models:**

<b>Model A: School-based WBL coordinator</b>	<b>Model B: District/regional WBL coordinator (shared services)</b>	<b>Model C: Intermediary-led WBL coordination (external broker)</b>
Best fit when a site has enough internships/clinical placements/youth apprenticeships to justify a dedicated role.	Best fit when schools individually lack volume but collectively need a steady employer pipeline and placement infrastructure.	Best fit when employer engagement is a major bottleneck or when liability/compliance/logistics are overwhelming for schools.

**CTE Coordinators**

CTE leadership roles often sit at the intersection of program design, pathway coherence, employer partnerships, and student access, which makes them a key part of the “advising ecosystem,” even when they are not labeled as advisors. Across district/school role descriptions, CTE coordinators commonly:

- Support CTE teachers/program quality and program implementation;
- Align programs to labor market demand and student outcomes;
- Build partnerships with industry and postsecondary;
- Coordinate grants/compliance and pathways expansion, including WBL and dual enrollment linkages.

**Common CTE Coordinator staffing models:**

<b>Model A: District CTE director + site-based pathway leads.</b>	<b>Model B: Site-based CTE coordinator (larger comprehensive high schools).</b>	<b>Model C: Regional CTE coordination (multi-district/ shared).</b>
The district sets program strategy and compliance; site leads handle scheduling, recruitment, and day-to-day pathway execution.	A school has enough pathways and employer partnerships to justify a dedicated coordination function, or has only one high school in the district.	Useful where rural scale makes individual site positions impractical.



## Classroom teachers and informal site-based roles

Even in systems with counselors and coaches, career advising is frequently distributed through:

- Advisory/mentor periods where teachers deliver career exploration curriculum;
- Informal advising by trusted adults (teachers, coaches, CTE instructors, club advisers);
- Administration or office staff who support logistics that enable advising (e.g., transcript requests, forms, scheduling coordination).

Note on teacher-as-advisor models (advisory periods): The research base on advisory programs is mixed and methodologically challenging, but existing reviews emphasize that positive outcomes depend heavily on clarity of purpose, consistent structures/curriculum, adult training, and integration with broader school personalization systems.

Common teacher/informal-role staffing configurations:

Model A: Advisory curriculum delivered by teachers + counselor/coach escalation path.	Model B: “Career-connected instruction” embedded in courses (especially CTE).
Teachers deliver universal career lessons; counselors/coaches handle higher-need or individualized cases.	Teachers integrate career exploration and pathway information directly into coursework with support from WBL/CTE staff.

## Navigator models (via workforce boards, intermediaries, and nonprofits)

Navigator models shift some advising and opportunity navigation functions to organizations that sit between education and workforce systems. A youth apprenticeship white paper published by the [US Department of Labor and Urban Institute](#) highlights intermediary organizations as a key design feature that can coordinate employers and other partners in youth apprenticeship systems. Similarly, [JFF describes intermediaries](#) as entities positioned to bring together partners and reduce fragmentation across education and workforce ecosystems. Intermediaries often specialize in:

- Employer engagement and relationship management;
- Student recruitment and matching;
- Supporting high-quality WBL/youth apprenticeship implementation across multiple schools/employers;
- Handling operational barriers (transportation coordination, screening, paperwork, training).



### Common navigator/intermediary staffing models:

Model A: Workforce board/nonprofit career navigators assigned to schools (embedded or visiting).	Model B: Regional intermediary operates WBL/youth apprenticeship placements for multiple districts.	Model C: Hybrid intermediary + school team.
Useful where schools lack staffing for high-touch navigation and barrier reduction.	Useful where employer engagement capacity is the primary constraint.	School provides counselors/coaches; intermediary provides employer pipeline, placements, and logistics.

## II. Guidance and Tools

### State and District Guidance Documents

State and district guidance documents shape advising in ways that often feel invisible until they are missing. In day-to-day practice, they help translate requirements into student facing language, they give adults shared routines, and they make planning information easier to find at the moments when decisions get made. When these tools are clear and widely used, the advising experience becomes less dependent on which staff member a student happens to reach.

Nevada's state level guidance for college and career advising is clearer than it was even just a year ago, largely because NDE now points to one central anchor. On the [NDE Career Guidance hub](#), the Nevada [College and Career Readiness Toolkit](#) is positioned as the primary guidance resource for career guidance and counseling and is framed around academic planning, career exploration, and postsecondary readiness. The Toolkit is meant to be usable by counselors, educators, administrators, students, and families across both middle school and high school settings.

One strength of the Toolkit is its emphasis on consistency and implementation that go beyond procedural compliance. The materials call for consistent messaging and continuous skill building for counselors and CCR team members, including staying current on career development best practices, Nevada work based learning guidance, and student perspectives. It also encourages cross role teams that include counselors, faculty, work based learning coordinators, and extracurricular leads to self assess their career readiness programming and plan for scaffolded experiences across the high school years. That orientation supports consistency across staff turnover and competing demands.



[CCR Diploma Counselor Guide materials](#) embedded in the Toolkit are another important anchor. The guide connects to Nevada Administrative Code and provides usable strategies for postsecondary advising and planning across grade levels. It is written to help counselors advise students on the CCR diploma requirements and to support students in meeting expectations that go beyond minimum graduation requirements. It is also framed as research based and aligned with the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, which gives districts a credible foundation for training and professional learning tied to advising practice.

Alongside the Toolkit, [statewide diploma requirement summaries](#) remain the policy reference points that drive many advising conversations, especially when students are choosing diploma types, endorsements, or flex credit pathways early enough for schedules to stay aligned.

District guidance is where the state foundation meets local course catalogs, scheduling processes, and family communication norms. Nevada leaves districts room to use the CCR Toolkit in full or in part and to supplement it with locally adopted tools and platforms. The upside is local fit. The predictable challenge is coherence for students and families when tools overlap or when learners move between schools and encounter different formats for the same planning work.

## **Pathway Maps and Program of Study Catalogs**

Pathway maps and programs of study catalogs are the translation layer between career exploration and course requests. They support a handful of practical decisions that impact students and families, including what is offered locally, how a multi-year sequence fits into a schedule, and what the pathway can lead to after graduation.

In Nevada, the most developed statewide backbone for pathway information sits in Career and Technical Education. Nevada's [programs of study](#) are organized within the National Career Clusters framework, and the state publishes technical resources that districts use to design and run programs. A Nevada program of study is defined as a sequence of academic and CTE coursework that supports transition to postsecondary opportunities and employment. The state backbone is built for program quality and consistency, while the student facing version of a pathway is created locally.

Two state level tools do much of the behind the scenes work. The [Interactive Program Directory](#) provides a statewide view of where CTE programs are offered, using enrollments reported in the state student information system plus district reported information. The [Nevada CTE Course Catalog](#) provides the official course titles and sequences that districts embed in local catalogs and



registration materials. For front line advising, these tools tend to show up when a question crosses school boundaries, such as a transfer or a course code mismatch.

The advising questions students bring to the table still require local detail. Students want to know where a program is located, how to get in, and what participation looks like in the context of a real school day. Those answers usually live in district career guides, school level pathway pages, and counseling hubs that bundle course selection materials with contacts and timelines.

Nevada also has a [statewide structure](#) that helps connect pathways to postsecondary credit. CTE college credit is tied to articulation agreements with Nevada System of Higher Education institutions, and the credit value is determined by the college for each program. This gives advising teams a clear anchor for explaining articulated credit, while local catalogs carry the program specific steps and deadlines. Below are a few examples of the local publishing layer in Nevada:

Douglas County School District publishes a [district CTE programs page](#) that is built around student facing program pathways. It lists offerings, links to short program videos, and provides downloadable brochures by pathway. It also includes a plain language statement of the CTE endorsement requirements and the required assessments. This is the kind of packaging a counselor can point a student to before or after a planning conversation.

Carson City School District publishes a [detailed CTE page](#) that reads like a local programs of study catalog. It lists programs of study by career cluster, and for individual programs it includes a course sequence, complementary courses, CTSO affiliation, an industry credential, and in several cases the instructor. It also lists district and school contacts including a career center specialist and a CTE and WBL coordinator, which turns the page into a navigation hub rather than a static catalog.

Churchill County School District hosts a [counseling department page](#) for its high school that centralizes the kinds of artifacts students and families actually need during course selection. It links the course catalog, graduation requirements, a course registration presentation, schedule change forms, dual enrollment information, and career planning tools. It also surfaces tools like NV Career Explorer and YouScience as part of the school's career planning toolkit.

Clark County School District operates a [dedicated CTE site](#) that includes a [district career guide](#) intended for students, families, and educators and counselors. The district frames the career guide as a way for students to explore pathways available at their local public high schools and use it as a conversation starter with parents and counselors.

White Pine County School District provides a [district CTE page](#) that lists which programs are offered at each high school and links employability standards. White Pine High School adds student friendly advising content through pages like [Graduation Options](#), which explains the CTE endorsement conditions and points students back to the course catalog for dual credit details. The WPHS [counseling page](#) reinforces program completion through the terminal course



and advanced studies and describes work study as part of career exploration. Those pieces together show how a small district can still provide a coherent local navigation layer.

## **Career Interest Inventories and Student Planning Tools**

Career interest inventories and planning tools are the infrastructure behind “explore early and often” and “graduate with real options.” When they work well, they give students repeated, low lift ways to notice patterns in interests and strengths, connect those patterns to local courses and experiences, and keep an evolving plan that can be revisited at key moments like course selection, program application, or postsecondary decision points. For advising teams, the most important distinction is between tools that live as guidance references and tools that sit in the student workflow. The first helps staff know what to do and what to point to. The second creates a reliable place where students actually do the work of planning and where staff can see progress.

At the state level, the clearest anchor is the [Nevada College and Career Readiness Toolkit](#) previously described. It is a rich support for counselor planning and advising responsibilities. The middle and high school modules are explicitly built around grade banded routines and include topic-based sequences that connect career interests to high school choices and programs of study, with hands-on activities designed for use in advisory, CTE, and other settings. The resources companion includes common career exploration tools and Nevada specific planning inputs.

The more complex part of the Nevada landscape sits in the platform layer. [Nevada Career Explorer, powered by Headed2](#), has functioned as a statewide career exploration system that links occupations, education pathways, and budgeting. The platform helps users explore careers, colleges, degrees, and job opportunities, and draws on [O\\*NET](#) for occupational information, [IPEDS](#) for college information, and US Census [Community Survey](#) data for localized cost of living. In September 2025, the sign in page posted an announcement that state sponsorship would end and the site would move to a closed access model effective November 1, 2025, with existing registered users retaining access and new account creation no longer available.

District selected platforms add another layer that is often more directly tied to advising workflows because they connect planning activities to real school processes such as transcript requests, college visit scheduling, program applications, and experience tracking. NDE’s Career Guidance page explicitly states that Nevada does not prescribe one statewide resource for career advising or individual learning plans and it describes districts as selecting or developing tools that support



interest exploration and multi year course planning along with other advising functions. Below is a snapshot from across Nevada of some of the district-level tools being leveraged.

**Clark County School District:** [Naviance by PowerSchool](#) appears on the district's approved software list as a college and career readiness platform that supports student planning activities. CCSD also has a district instance of Nevada CareerExplorer powered by Headed2.

**Lyon County School District:** [SchoolLinks](#) is used districtwide as a student planning platform focused on college and career exploration and postsecondary planning.

**Elko County School District:** [SchoolLinks](#) shows up as an active workflow tool for students, including submitting applications for specific career connected programs through a SchoolLinks account accessed via the district Clever portal.

**Washoe County School District:** WCSD maintains a district instance of [Nevada CareerExplorer powered by Headed2](#).

**Carson City School District:** Carson City maintains a district instance of [Nevada CareerExplorer powered by Headed2](#).

## **Work-Based Learning process tools, forms, and credit guidance**

Work based learning runs on routines. Districts need clear steps for safety, supervision, and credit so placements can happen predictably. A placement has to be safe, supervised, and aligned to learning goals. Someone has to vet the worksite, document what the student is doing, and confirm how time in the workplace translates into credit or recognition. The guidance and tools in this category do not function as student facing exploration resources. They function as operating infrastructure that helps districts run WBL consistently and protects students, staff, and employer partners.

Nevada statute sets the expectations that shape how districts design WBL processes. [NRS 389.167](#) allows students to apply one or more credits earned through completion of a work based learning program toward elective credits, and it requires districts and charter schools to apply to offer a program with core elements spelled out in law. The statute also requires training for participating students on harassment reporting, healthy workplace relationships, and recognizing predatory behavior, plus reporting on participation and WBL types with participation disaggregated by student characteristics.



[NDE's Work Based Learning hub](#) contains the documents and forms that translate the statutory requirements of NRS 389.167 into workable routines. The hub consolidates a small set of core artifacts that are designed for district and school teams who run WBL. The [Guide to Work Based Learning](#), revised in August 2023, lays out Nevada's WBL continuum and definitions, then moves into implementation expectations that districts have to manage to operate at scale. It also includes appendices with ready to use templates, including a coordinator checklist, guidelines for common WBL experience types, plus sample training plans and agreements.

The [Work Based Learning Application](#) and the [Employer Host Vetting Rubric](#) are the practical backbone of the state approach. The application is the approval vehicle and it is built around decisions that determine whether WBL can run as a routine. It requires local board approval before submission to NDE and it prompts districts to specify what they will offer, how students qualify, how participation is evaluated, and how employer hosts will be vetted. It also calls for required workplace safety training topics and it requires districts to attach their local student application and training agreement forms for experiences that exceed 30 hours. The one page Employer Host Vetting Rubric functions as a standard screen for worksites and confirms baseline conditions such as safety practices, harassment policies, accessibility, supervision, and worker's compensation for paid placements.

## **Workforce system advising supports outside schools**

Outside the K to 12 system, [Nevada's public workforce infrastructure](#) already carries a share of the navigation work that students and young adults need. It is built for people who are trying to get hired, change jobs, or connect to training, which makes it especially relevant for older students, out of school youth, and learners who are ready for paid work experience. In practice, these supports show up as a front door for job search and referrals, a coach who can stay involved over time, and labor market information that helps people make choices that match real demand.

EmployNV is the most visible access point. In Southern Nevada, EmployNV Career Hubs operate as American Job Centers and provide training and employment services that connect jobseekers to work based training, education, and employment opportunities. Many hubs are intentionally placed in community locations. The Las Vegas Clark County [Library District](#) hosts [EmployNV Career Hubs](#) and describes them as a place to get help with resume writing, interview coaching, and computer access, alongside other career supports offered through the library system. [EmployNV Youth Hubs](#) serve youth ages 16 to 24 and are staffed with career coaches who support career exploration, work readiness, and paid internships or work experience opportunities.



The EmployNV platform layer also includes the statewide job database where users can search job openings and post a resume online. Nevada JobConnect provides another set of workforce entry points through career centers that offer services such as job finding workshops, referral and placement services, and job counseling.

In Northern Nevada, [NevadaWorks](#) operates EmployNV facilities and describes EmployNV as a collaboration between NevadaWorks and the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation. NevadaWorks also signals dedicated youth facing navigation capacity through plans for a [soon to launch](#) EmployNV Youth Hub focused on the Reno Sparks area, with education, employment, and training services for ages 16 to 24 and career coaches focused on youth career exploration and employability skills.

WIOA youth programming through local workforce development boards provide young people with another layer of services. Workforce Connections and NevadaWorks use career coaching and case management models that track progress and connect participants to training and paid work experiences. Workforce Connections [youth program design](#) explicitly assigns a career coach to follow each youth's progress and build coaching into the full program experience. In the northern region, NevadaWorks Title I youth program [materials](#) describe services aimed at helping out of school youth build education and skills that connect to employment and training opportunities.

Several statewide tools shape what workforce coaches and community partners point young people toward. OWINN publishes [in demand occupation analyses](#), including statewide and regional lists, that translate labor market data into a short set of roles with strong job demand and wages. Nevada's labor market information system also publishes industry and [occupational projections](#) for the state and regions, which can support advising and pathway messaging. For job seekers using public training funds, the [Eligible Training Provider List](#) provides a vetted menu of training options maintained collaboratively across Workforce Connections, NevadaWorks, and DETR. For learners interested in apprenticeship as a paid training route, Nevada maintains a statewide entry point through the [Nevada State Apprenticeship Council](#) and a contact list for current registered apprenticeship programs. Another navigation channel sits inside DETR for youth with disabilities. [VR Nevada](#) provides pre employment transition services for students ages 14 to 21 who are enrolled in secondary or postsecondary programs and have qualifying disability documentation, creating a bridge between school planning and employment oriented supports.



### III. Technology

Technology shapes advising capacity by determining whether career exploration, planning, and work-based learning live inside a small set of integrated tools or are scattered across disconnected websites, PDFs, and spreadsheets. Strong systems use digital platforms to support repeatable routines by grade band, capture student work products, and reduce administrative time for counselors, coaches, and work-based learning coordinators. The highest-leverage investments are usually the ones that remove friction for students and families, simplify staff workflows, and make participation and outcomes visible without duplicate data entry.

#### Career Exploration Platforms

Career exploration and planning platforms sit on a spectrum from public, open-access tools to district-licensed systems that integrate with student records and school workflows. The most effective platforms help students build a durable planning habit through short, repeated cycles of self-discovery, exploration, decision-making, and reflection. They also create a shared workspace where adults can see progress, target outreach, and guide students through key milestones such as course selection, program applications, and postsecondary transitions.

Nevada's landscape includes a statewide exploration platform in [Nevada Career Explorer](#), which notes a shift to a closed-access model for new users after November 1, 2025. Districts also use district-selected platforms that align more directly to advising workflows, including tools that support multi-year planning, document management, and experience tracking. The [NDE Career Guidance page](#) reinforces a local decision model and describes districts as responsible for implementing practices that meet statutory requirements and local policy.

Across the country, districts that report strong adoption tend to do a few things consistently. They select a platform that can serve as the main student workspace, they embed it into a grade-banded scope and sequence, and they connect the platform to real decisions students make in school. Adoption also improves when platforms are accessible through the tools students already use for school sign-in and daily work, and when staff can run simple reports that show which students are on track and which students need outreach.

Platform selection and implementation decisions that tend to affect advising capacity include the ability to map exploration content to local programs of study, the quality of built-in labor market information, supports for multilingual families, reporting features that reduce manual tracking, and interoperability with district systems through secure rostering and single sign-on. A growing



number of platforms also offer AI-enabled features that can surface next steps, draft content, or answer questions, such as [PowerSchool's PowerBuddy for College and Career](#) inside Naviance (used by several Nevada districts), which makes the governance and data privacy posture of vendors even more important during procurement and rollout.

#### Commissioner exploration links (examples not endorsements):

- [Naviance CCLR](#) and the associated [work-based learning feature documentation](#)
- [SchoolLinks platform overview](#) plus a district example in Community High School District 155
- [Xello K-12 college and career readiness platform](#)
- [MajorClarity](#) and an overview via [Edmentum](#)
- [YouScience Brightpath](#)
- [Kuder Navigator](#)
- Public tools used widely alongside district platforms such as [My Next Move](#) and CareerOneStop

## Virtual Reality Career Exposure Options

Virtual career exposure tools expand the number of careers and workplaces students can see within limited time, staffing, and travel constraints. Districts use a range of options, from curated career video libraries and 360-degree workplace tours to Virtual Reality (VR) simulations that let students safely try job tasks connected to high-demand pathways. These tools are often used to strengthen middle school exposure, broaden options for rural communities, and increase the frequency of career-connected experiences between in-person events.

Lightweight approaches tend to be easier to scale quickly. They include short videos, interactive career profiles, and virtual industry speakers integrated into advisory, CTE courses, or career exploration units. More immersive options require greater planning around devices, space, facilitation, and technical support. Headset-based simulations can be particularly valuable when they align to specific pathways offered locally, when they reinforce employability skills and safety routines, and when they are scheduled as part of a recurring sequence rather than a one-time novelty experience.

Several states and districts have begun deploying immersive career exploration tools as part of broader workforce strategies, including examples like [North Dakota's use of VR for career exploration](#). These efforts commonly pair technology with structured facilitation and reflection so that students connect what they experienced to real course and program choices.



Implementation decisions that tend to determine impact include whether students can access experiences without specialized equipment, how well content is aligned to local pathways and employer demand, the availability of educator guides, and accommodations for students who cannot use headsets. Districts also need a plan for device management, cleaning, and storage, plus clear protocols for student data collected through third-party tools.

#### Commissioner exploration links (examples not endorsements):

- [Transfr](#) for VR career training simulations
- CareerViewXR for 360-degree career exploration content
- [Pathful Connect](#) for virtual career speakers and career-connected learning
- [VirtualJobShadow](#) for online career exploration videos and tools
- [zSpace Career Readiness](#) for AR and VR learning experiences connected to career awareness
- [VictoryXR CTE](#) for immersive CTE and career training simulations
- A statewide implementation example in [North Dakota's VR initiative](#)

### Employer Matching Platforms and Internship Marketplaces

Employer matching tools can lower the transaction cost of creating and managing work-based learning experiences by centralizing employer outreach, opportunity publishing, student applications, and placement tracking. Districts that scale internships, clinical placements, job shadows, and youth apprenticeship usually rely on some form of shared system that helps staff manage high-volume logistics while maintaining quality and safety.

Across the country, two broad approaches show up most often. Some districts run curated opportunity boards where staff post vetted opportunities and manage placements. Other models include employer portals that allow employer partners to submit opportunities that staff review before publishing. Both approaches tend to work best when the system includes clear workflow steps for approval, student readiness, supervision, and documentation.

Nevada's policy framework makes operational consistency especially important. The work-based learning statute in [NRS 389.167](#) requires districts and charter schools to apply to offer programs, include defined program elements, train participating students, and report participation. The [NDE Work-based Learning hub](#) includes a user guide, application materials, and supporting forms that help translate these requirements into local routines. Technology choices that align to these requirements can reduce paperwork, standardize documentation, and make it easier to produce participation reporting without rebuilding tracking systems in each school.



A third channel sits outside school systems and can complement district tools for older students and out-of-school youth. Workforce partners such as the EmployNV Youth Hubs connect young adults to coaching and paid work experiences. Clear referral pathways and data sharing agreements can help schools and workforce partners coordinate support for students who need additional navigation into work experiences. The “marketplace” label can be confusing in K-12. Many open platforms focus on older learners or have participation constraints based on age, labor law, or employer policy. District-managed tools that include structured vetting and supervision workflows are usually the better fit for minors.

#### Commissioner exploration links (examples not endorsements):

- [ImBlaze](#) and a district example described by KQED
- Jobready360 for work-based learning management workflows
- SchoolLinks Work Based Learning module
- [Naviance work-based learning feature documentation](#)
- [MajorClarity work-based learning approach](#)
- [Xello work-based learning feature overview](#)
- Student-facing opportunity discovery tools such as [Tallo internships](#) and virtual experiences via [Forage for Education](#)

### **Data systems and how opportunities are posted and found**

The underlying data layer determines whether students and staff can reliably find opportunities and whether the state can see participation at scale. When opportunity information is spread across multiple postings, inboxes, spreadsheets, and websites, students encounter inconsistent information and staff spend time reconciling duplicates. A coherent data approach treats opportunities as structured records that can flow across systems and be searched consistently.

Many districts that scale career-connected learning define a common opportunity record with a small set of required fields. Those fields often include the type of experience, industry area, location and transportation expectations, schedule, eligibility requirements, paid or unpaid status, supervision plan, safety requirements, and the learning outcomes or competencies students will build. Standardized tagging allows search and matching within a district and across partners. It also improves reporting quality because experiences can be grouped consistently by type and intensity.



Interoperability standards are the practical backbone of a more coherent ecosystem. For education systems, [1EdTech OneRoster](#) supports secure sharing of roster information across tools, reducing manual account creation and improving adoption. [1EdTech LTI](#) supports secure tool integration and simplifies access across platforms. Broader data standards and definitions such as [Ed-Fi](#) and the [Common Education Data Standards](#) can support consistent data exchange and shared reporting definitions when multiple systems need to connect. The [CoSN Interoperability Toolkit](#) provides a district-facing set of resources that many systems use to guide procurement language, integration planning, and governance.

Digital credentials are another emerging part of the data layer. Districts and states are exploring portable ways to represent skills and achievements through standards such as [Open Badges](#) and the [W3C Verifiable Credentials data model](#). Credential transparency infrastructure such as the [Credential Engine CTDL](#) supports publishing and comparing credential information in structured formats, which can help students and families understand what a credential is, what it signals, and what pathways it connects to.

Data governance and cybersecurity remain central constraints when advising technology touches student records and work-based learning placements. The [U.S. Department of Education FERPA resources](#) and [K-12 cybersecurity guidance](#) provide a baseline for privacy and security expectations that districts increasingly build into procurement, data-sharing agreements, and vendor management.

## IV. Most Binding Gaps + Areas of Opportunities

Nevada has many of the ingredients needed for strong career pathways, including robust CTE participation, active workforce partners, and a growing set of digital tools and program infrastructure. The constraints that slow scale are less about the absence of programs and more about the operating conditions that determine whether students can consistently access guidance, exploration, and real experiences. The gaps below are the most binding because they create friction at the point of delivery, where a student needs time with a trusted adult, a clear next step, and a simple way to access an opportunity.

### **Not enough dedicated time for career advising**

Career advising involves a progression of touchpoints that support exploration, course choices, pathway entry, work based learning readiness, and postsecondary transitions. When time is scarce, schools tend to concentrate career advising into short windows tied to course selection or senior



year transitions. Students who need earlier exposure, repeated planning conversations, or barrier reduction support are least likely to get it.

Nevada's counselor capacity context amplifies the time squeeze. The commonly cited benchmark from the [American School Counselor Association](#) is 250 students per counselor, with the intent that counselors can spend most of their time in direct and indirect student services. High caseloads push counselors toward triage, with urgent needs and compliance tasks taking priority over forward looking career planning. Time pressure increases further when licensed counselors are assigned responsibilities outside the core counseling program, a dynamic ASCA calls out in its [guidance on appropriate and inappropriate activities](#). Work based learning coordination compounds the same challenge. Even a single high quality placement requires employer cultivation, student matching, documentation, training, supervision, and credit routines. Some models treat this as a dedicated function with substantial staffing behind it. When schools run work based learning as a side assignment, placement volume and quality tend to stall.

States and districts that make progress generally combine three moves that enable role clarity and protected time. They shift scheduling and records tasks off licensed staff. They add specialized capacity such as career coaches, transition advisors, or postsecondary counselors who can run universal career programming at scale. They establish scheduled routines by grade band so career advising becomes predictable, not dependent on individual heroics. Intermediaries and workforce partners can extend capacity when they operate as true brokers with shared workflows and clear handoffs, rather than a separate set of disconnected services.

### **Fragmented tool landscape**

District and school teams describe an environment with many platforms that touch career exploration, course planning, communications, and work based learning administration. Students and staff often navigate multiple logins and overlapping tools that were adopted at different times for different purposes. Tool sprawl is not unique to Nevada. National reporting on the LearnPlatform EdTech Top 40 analysis highlights that districts can access thousands of digital tools over the course of a year, which increases redundancy and creates pressure to streamline. A recent example is the EdSurge piece on [how districts are streamlining their digital ecosystems](#). Even when districts invest in strong tools, adoption stalls when the tool set feels fragmented, when training is inconsistent, or when tools are not integrated into everyday routines.

Districts that reduce friction in this area usually decide on a minimum viable advising stack that covers a few core functions:



- A student facing career exploration and planning workspace.
- A work based learning opportunity inventory and placement workflow.
- A communication pathway that families can actually follow.

From there, interoperability becomes the practical requirement: single sign on, automated rostering, and standards based integrations reduce the human effort needed to keep tools aligned. This requires a strategic shift toward treating tool decisions as operating system decisions that prioritize clear ownership for each tool, a process for sunseting redundant platforms, and procurement criteria that prioritize interoperability and evidence of adoption. It also means aligning tools to the actual advising progression so staff are not forced to rebuild the workflow in every building.

### **Middle school career exposure**

Middle school is the hinge point for career exploration. Students are developmentally ready to explore interests and identities, and families begin making choices that shape high school experiences. National policy analysis and practitioner guidance increasingly emphasize the middle grades as the right entry point for structured career exploration. The [Education Commission of the States overview of career exploration in middle school](#) reflects this consensus, and the [ACTE report on career exploration in middle school](#) lays out state approaches and implementation strategies.

In Nevada, leaders describe a familiar pipeline problem. Career exploration can be uneven across grades 6 to 8, and students often arrive in ninth grade with limited exposure to career clusters, regional industry demand, and the practical steps required to access pathway programs. Middle school CTE experiences can also feel disconnected from the high school program map, which weakens the signal students and families receive about what comes next. Family engagement challenges amplify this. Schools report that many families do not realize how early course choices can influence eligibility for specialized high school opportunities, and that engagement tends to spike later than the decision points require.

The strongest middle school approaches use a mix of short, repeatable experiences such as interest inventories, career speakers, career fairs, virtual tours, and structured reflection. They connect these experiences to a tangible output such as a portfolio artifact, a draft four year plan, or a set of pathway preferences that inform high school advising. Strong programs also formalize feeder pattern routines. High schools that send teams into middle schools for early information sessions and family events reduce confusion and increase equitable access to specialized



programs. Aligning middle school CTE course titles and content to high school clusters strengthens the transition and helps students see a coherent story across grades.

## Rural Access and Transportation

Geography shapes access to experiences. Rural communities can have fewer employers within commuting distance, fewer staff dedicated to partnership development, and fewer pathway offerings in any single school. Transportation is a recurring barrier for work based learning, dual enrollment, and industry credential access. Scheduling is equally binding. Traditional bell schedules and seat time expectations make it difficult for students to leave campus for a sustained placement, even when an employer is willing.

National research on rural pathways highlights the same constraints and points toward regional solutions. The JFF report on [implementing college and career pathways in rural communities](#) and the U S Department of Labor affiliated paper on [registered apprenticeship and work based learning in rural America](#) both emphasize that partnerships and coordination capacity are decisive factors, not just program design. A few strategies that improve outcomes include:

- **Regional brokerage** can pool demand across schools and lower the unit cost of employer engagement. A shared coordinator model can build consistent employer pipelines across multiple campuses, which is more realistic than expecting each rural school to sustain full partnership infrastructure alone.
- **Flexible scheduling** can unlock participation. Summer placements, after school experiences, and credit bearing work outside of the school day can expand access without forcing students to choose between graduation requirements and participation.
- **Transportation supports** can be treated as a core part of the work based learning design. National work based learning guidance frequently points to barrier removal strategies such as transit passes, stipends, and partnerships that reduce travel burden. The [Advance CTE work based learning report](#) includes examples of systems that expand access through paid summer internships and other structured approaches.
- **Virtual exposure and remote experiences** can complement, not replace, local placements. In rural communities, virtual career speakers, project based employer engagements, and remote mentoring can provide early exposure and broaden networks, while in person experiences remain the anchor for skill building when feasible.

## No common, simple on ramp for students and families



Even when opportunities exist, access depends on clarity. Students and families need a simple, shared storyline that answers a few basic questions. What should I do this year? Who can help me? Where do I find opportunities? What do I need to qualify? Without a consistent narrative, the system feels like a patchwork. Students with strong informal networks navigate. Students without those networks rely on chance.

Many states and regions address this through a clear student journey map paired with grade level checklists. Delaware Pathways provides a strong example through its [student and family checklists by grade band](#), along with common promotional materials districts can reuse. Louisiana's Jump Start program offers a plain language family guide in the [Jump Start brochure for parents and caregivers](#). Colorado districts commonly use ICAP checklists and family guides as a shared organizing tool, with one example shown in Aurora Public Schools materials on [individual career and academic plans](#). These tools reduce the need for families to decode the system from scratch.



## Appendix - Key Definitions

<b>Advising Capacity</b>	The distribution of key advising functions across roles, the protected time for those functions, and the systems that let staff do the work efficiently.
<b>Career Pathway Development</b>	Structured career exploration (interest inventories, goal-setting, pathway awareness, and exposure to “what’s possible”).
<b>Individual Planning and Navigation</b>	Course planning aligned to pathways; postsecondary transition support; family engagement; and targeted barrier reduction.
<b>Opportunity Brokerage</b>	Identifying, matching, and placing students into career-connected experiences (WBL, internships, youth apprenticeship, dual credit, industry credentials).
<b>Employer/ Intermediary relationship management</b>	Recruiting employers; managing agreements; preparing mentors; ensuring compliance; and coordinating placements across sites.
<b>Work-Based Learning</b>	A continuum of structured workplace experiences (e.g., job shadowing, internships, clinicals, apprenticeships) with supervision and a learning purpose; may include credit.
<b>Intermediary / Navigator Model</b>	An organization that sits between education and workforce systems to coordinate employer engagement, student matching, and operational logistics across multiple sites.
<b>Career Exploration Platform</b>	A digital tool that helps students explore careers and plan course and postsecondary pathways; may connect to district workflows (course selection, applications, experience tracking).



## Appendix - Acronyms & Short Forms

<b>AB539</b>	Nevada Assembly Bill 539 (2025) – authorizes DETR (subject to available funds) to place career coaches in middle/junior high schools.	<b>ICAP</b>	Individual Career and Academic Plan.
<b>ACT</b>	College admissions/placement assessment (American College Testing).	<b>IPEDS</b>	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (U.S. Dept. of Education).
<b>ACTE</b>	Association for Career and Technical Education.	<b>LTI</b>	Learning Tools Interoperability (1EdTech standard).
<b>AI</b>	Artificial intelligence.	<b>NDE</b>	Nevada Department of Education.
<b>AR</b>	Augmented reality.	<b>NGCP</b>	Next Generation Career Pathways (CIEE subcommittee).
<b>ASCA</b>	American School Counselor Association.	<b>NRS</b>	Nevada Revised Statutes.
<b>CCLR</b>	College, Career & Life Readiness (Naviance module).	<b>O*NET</b>	Occupational Information Network (U.S. Dept. of Labor).
<b>CCR</b>	College and Career Ready (e.g., CCR Diploma; CCR Toolkit).	<b>OWINN</b>	Office of Workforce Innovation (Governor’s Office).
<b>CIEE</b>	Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education.	<b>OneRoster</b>	1EdTech standard for secure roster data sharing.
<b>CoSN</b>	Consortium for School Networking.	<b>SEL</b>	Social and Emotional Learning.
<b>CTDL</b>	Credential Transparency Description Language (Credential Engine).	<b>VR (Voc Rehab)</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation (e.g., VR Nevada) – employment/ transition supports for eligible students and youth.
<b>CTE</b>	Career and Technical Education.	<b>VR (Virtual Reality)</b>	Immersive technology used for career exposure experiences.
<b>CTSO</b>	Career and Technical Student Organization.	<b>W3C</b>	World Wide Web Consortium.
<b>DETR</b>	(Nevada) Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation.	<b>WBL</b>	Work-Based Learning.
<b>Ed-Fi</b>	Education data standard used for K–12 data exchange.	<b>WIOA</b>	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
<b>FERPA</b>	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.	<b>1EdTech</b>	Standards body (formerly IMS Global) behind OneRoster and LTI.