

Model Policies for Advancing Durable Skills



AMERICA
SUCCEEDS



Model Policies

1. An Agile High School Model	2. A System Aligned With Durable Skills Education	3. Quality Career-Connected Learning Opportunities
1A. Revitalize the high school experience by modernizing graduation requirements	2A. Develop robust, employer-aligned career-readiness standards	3A. Design a comprehensive work-based learning framework
1B. Embrace learning beyond the classroom with seat-time waivers and credit flexibility	2B. Strengthen accountability and transparency for career readiness	3B. Reimagine career and technical education
1C. Invest in pilot programs and innovation zones		

An Agile High School Model

1A. Revitalize the high school experience by modernizing graduation requirements:

Expanding graduation requirements to provide multiple pathways to a diploma can incentivize mastery through the implementation of local or state-approved assessments and projects that better represent competency in content areas than traditional assessment models alone. With more expansive and meaningful graduation requirements, learners will be better equipped for success in postsecondary education and the workforce.

Summary	Components of Model Policy	Research, Resources, and Model Policies
<p>States can support their education system in becoming more agile by empowering schools and districts to embrace skills-centric graduation requirements, recognizing competency-based credits, and endorsing personalized evaluation models. By fostering alternative assessment strategies that complement traditional standardized tests, educators can employ innovative methodologies to gauge student learning. This novel approach incentivizes the implementation of personalized and/or student-centered learning models by validating locally-designed courses and assessment methods, allowing for credit to be awarded based on proficiency or competency, and adaptable educational environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ States provide broad flexibility for districts to modify their graduation requirements, coupled with either notifying the state about their alternative requirements or gaining state approval for the same. ■ States should offer robust technical support and guidance to districts as they adopt and implement graduation requirements based on competency or proficiency. ■ States should establish a comprehensive system for tracking and collecting data on the adoption of new graduation standards by districts, the utilization of various assessment models, and the extent to which alternative learning models such as work-based learning contribute to credit attainment. ■ States should decouple graduation requirements from explicit links with state assessments, ensuring that the criteria for graduation requirements remain distinct from standardized testing outcomes. 	<p>Model Policies</p> <p><u>Colorado</u></p> <p><u>Rhode Island</u></p> <p><u>South Carolina</u></p> <p><u>Vermont</u></p> <p><u>Washington</u></p> <p>State Models</p> <p>Colorado: <u>Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options</u></p> <p>Rhode Island: <u>Proficiency Based Learning Guidelines</u></p> <p>Washington: <u>Graduation Pathways</u></p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Getting Smart: <u>The Future of High School</u></p> <p>KnowledgeWorks: <u>State Policymaker’s Guide On Student-Centered Learning</u></p>

1B. Embrace learning beyond the classroom with seat-time waivers and credit flexibility:

Shifting from the traditional reliance on Carnegie units for assessing student performance can empower schools to establish seat-time waivers and credit flexibility. These measures enable students to receive credit for learning experiences outside the conventional classroom boundaries.

Summary	Components of Model Policy	Research, Resources, and Model Policies
<p>Recognizing that learning happens in many settings beyond conventional classrooms, states have the opportunity to validate student learning beyond traditional parameters. This flexibility not only enriches learning opportunities but also encourages educators to craft inventive educational models. This imperative lies in granting students increased autonomy over their learning journeys through seat-time flexibility that allows them to seamlessly participate in work-based learning, career and technical education, and other experiential learning opportunities.</p> <p>Students will be empowered to cultivate career interests and knowledge beyond classroom walls, fostering Durable Skills and technical proficiencies alike.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ States should implement seat-time waivers to empower schools in adopting innovative learning methodologies such as competency-based education and capstone graduation requirements.■ States should establish a framework for awarding credit, acknowledging mastery of required graduation standards through experiential learning, projects, and activities conducted beyond the conventional school setting.■ States should introduce measures for credit enhancement that give credit to students who receive sufficient scores in assessments aligned with graduation requirements. Thus, offering an alternative pathway for students to fulfill graduation requirements.	<h3>Model Policies</h3> <p><u>Arizona</u></p> <p><u>Michigan</u></p> <p><u>Minnesota</u> / <u>Minnesota</u> (bills passed in conjunction)</p> <p><u>South Carolina</u></p> <p><u>Ohio</u></p> <p><u>Washington</u></p> <h3>State Models</h3> <p>Washington: <u>State Featured Policy Recommendations</u></p> <p>Ohio: <u>Credit Flexibility Law Overview</u></p> <p>New Hampshire: <u>Learn Everywhere Policy</u></p> <p>South Carolina: <u>Flexibility For Implementing Personalized Learning Overview</u></p> <h3>Resources</h3> <p>Education Commission of the States: <u>State Policies to Support Student-Centered Learning</u></p> <p>ExcelinEd: <u>Debunking the Myth of Seat-Time</u></p>

1C. Invest in pilot programs and innovation zones:

The creation of state-funded pilot programs and innovation zones supports a research and development culture, allowing schools to experiment with and assess student-centered learning models that they would otherwise be unable to implement.

Summary	Components of Model Policy	Research, Resources, and Model Policies
<p>Like other fields, education systems advance through research and development of new models – some work and some do not, and learning through experimentation allows educators to explore and discover what’s possible for students. State support of innovation is critical, yet often overlooked.</p> <p>Personalized learning pilot programs offer select schools the flexibility to adopt student-centered learning models that are often accompanied by state-funded support for program planning, implementation, and scaling. Similarly, innovation zones grant schools or districts the autonomy to embrace diverse learning models, allowing them to submit innovation plans outlining strategies for enhanced student outcomes and seek waivers from state regulations that may act as barriers to implementation. These programs address policy and funding issues, enabling schools to implement innovative learning practices that promote deeper learning, foster Durable Skills development, and cultivate career interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ States should establish a culture of research and development through pilot programs and/or innovation zones that empower selected districts and schools with the necessary flexibility to foster an environment conducive to innovative learning practices.■ States should provide funding to districts and schools engaged in innovative initiatives to bolster capacity-building, professional development, and data collection is essential for effective program execution.■ States should facilitate the establishment of a network connecting districts and schools involved in innovative learning practices to encourage mutual support, exchange insights, and capture learned knowledge.	<p>Model Policies</p> <p><u>Colorado</u></p> <p><u>Idaho</u></p> <p><u>Illinois</u></p> <p><u>Michigan</u></p> <p>State Models</p> <p>Massachusetts: <u>Innovation Schools</u></p> <p>Tennessee: <u>Innovative School Models</u></p> <p>Idaho: <u>Mastery Education Network</u></p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Education Commission of the States: <u>State Policies to Support Student-Centered Learning</u></p> <p>ExcelinEd: <u>National Landscape Overview and Guiding Principles for Strengthening the Use of State-Authorized Waivers for Innovation</u></p> <p>Aurora Institute: <u>Innovation Zones Policy Brief</u></p>

A System Aligned With Durable Skills Education

2A. Develop robust, employer-aligned career-readiness standards:

States can better prepare students for a future that demands a combination of academic knowledge and Durable Skills by integrating career-readiness skills alongside academic skill development.

Summary	Components of Model Policy	Research, Resources, and Model Policies
<p>As states seek to prepare students for the workforce and equip them with Durable Skills, it is imperative to develop comprehensive career-readiness standards that complement academic learning expectations. Non-academic skill development plays a crucial role in empowering students with competencies that transcend their specific career paths and endure throughout their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ States involve business and industry leaders in the development of career-readiness standards to ensure their relevance and effectiveness over time. ■ States should explicitly incorporate the development of Durable Skills into their career-readiness standards, aligning standards with the skills most in demand among employers. ■ States should provide career exploration and guidance in elementary, middle, and high school to expose students to a variety of career options throughout their K-12 journey, establishing meaningful context for career-readiness standards. ■ States should foster partnerships with businesses, industries, and community organizations to provide hands-on experiences to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application of career-readiness standards. 	<p>Model Policies</p> <p><u>Indiana</u></p> <p><u>Colorado</u></p> <p>State Models</p> <p>Indiana: <u>Graduates Prepared to Succeed</u></p> <p>Colorado: <u>Crosswalk of College and Career Readiness Standards with ICAP Quality Indicators</u></p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Office of Elementary and Secondary Education: <u>Valuing College and Career Readiness in State Accountability Systems</u></p> <p>Bellwether: <u>Expanding Opportunity: How States Can Accelerate the Use of Career Pathways Programs to Help Young People Access Meaningful Careers</u></p>

2B. Strengthen accountability and transparency for career readiness:

Develop a seamless accountability and transparency framework that spans all levels of the education system, ensuring learners are well-prepared for success in the workforce.

Summary	Components of Model Policy	Research, Resources, and Model Policies
<p>In an era where the demands of the workforce are constantly evolving, it is imperative to create a unified, seamless framework that bridges accountability and transparency across all educational levels. Such a comprehensive framework empowers learners from kindergarten through postsecondary education to make informed decisions about their educational pathways and career objectives. By blending accountability enhancements with transparency measures, we ensure that students are well-equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in an ever-changing job market. This integrated approach reflects a commitment to excellence in education and the lifelong success of our learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ States should incorporate a dedicated career-readiness indicator into their accountability frameworks.■ States should be provided with the flexibility to select additional accountability indicators aligned with career-focused education.■ States should foster collaboration with stakeholders at every level to develop, implement, and continually refine accountability measures, ensuring their relevance.■ States should establish comprehensive data collection and reporting systems for post-graduation outcomes, including employment rates, average salaries, and career trajectories, across the entire education spectrum (including post-secondary programs).■ States should hold educational institutions accountable for the precision and completeness of data reporting, ensuring that students have access to reliable and up-to-date information.■ States should leverage data to evaluate program effectiveness and consistently enhance educational offerings, aligning them with the evolving needs of both students and the job market.	<p>Model Policies</p> <p><u>Pennsylvania</u></p> <p><u>Tennessee</u></p> <p>State Models</p> <p>Utah: <u>Next Generation School Accountability</u></p> <p>Tennessee: <u>Graduate Ready Indicator</u></p> <p>Oregon: <u>Consolidated State Plan under the ESSA</u></p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Learning Policy Institute: <u>Whole Child Policy Toolkit - Assessment and Accountability</u></p> <p>Education Strategy Group: <u>Making Career Readiness Count</u></p>

Quality Career-Connected Learning Opportunities

3A. Design a comprehensive work-based learning framework:

Meaningful work-based learning experiences provide educational opportunities for students to build and apply both durable and hard skills and knowledge, playing a vital role in their career path journey. A robust work-based learning framework is essential to fostering high-quality, learner-centered work-based learning experiences.

Summary	Components of Model Policy	Research, Resources, and Model Policies
<p>A comprehensive work-based learning (WBL) framework, supported by clear expectations and quality standards, acts as a catalyst for collaborative, adaptable, and inclusive learning environments. This structured approach empowers students to make informed career decisions, develop critical skills, build meaningful professional connections, and supports employers in providing enriching, out-of-the-classroom learning experiences. Incorporating Durable Skills into the framework ensures that WBL opportunities offer students the chance to develop competencies that are not only essential for succeeding in their chosen professions but also vital for personal growth and adaptability in an ever-changing world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As part of a comprehensive WBL framework, states/districts should develop a quality guide for WBL programs that include comprehensive guidelines to design, implement, and evaluate WBL programs while emphasizing student learning outcomes and alignment with industry needs. ■ States/districts should develop an expectations guide for students and employers to define clear roles and responsibilities for each party participating in WBL that ensures a mutual understanding of commitments and deliverables. ■ States/districts should explicitly include Durable Skills as essential learning objectives in WBL program requirements so that students will understand the significance of Durable Skills as part of their career development journey. ■ States/districts should encourage strong collaboration among education institutions, employers, policymakers, and community organizations to create a cohesive approach to WBL that responds to local industry needs. ■ Districts should incorporate reflective practices centered around Durable Skills into WBL programs to encourage introspection and application of these skills. ■ States/districts should develop documentation/credentialing of Durable Skills to recognize students' achievements in cultivating these competencies. ■ States/districts should implement ongoing assessment and feedback strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of WBL programs and identify areas for improvement. 	<p>Model Policies</p> <p><u>Washington</u></p> <p><u>Maryland</u></p> <p><u>Tennessee</u></p> <p>State Models</p> <p>Colorado: <u>Quality Work-Based Learning Indicators</u></p> <p>Kentucky: <u>Work-Based Learning resource page</u></p> <p>Tennessee: <u>Work-Based Learning Framework</u></p> <p>Resources</p> <p>American Student Assistance: <u>Working to Learn and Learning to Work: A State by State Analysis of High School Work-Based Learning Policies</u></p> <p>Perkins Collaborative Resource Network: <u>Scaling Work-Based Learning Programs</u></p> <p>Education Commission of the States: <u>Work-Based Learning Model Policy Components</u></p>

3B. Reimagine career and technical education:

Modernizing career and technical education programs to align with the evolving needs of the workforce ensures learning experiences remain relevant and empowers students by equipping them with skills essential for lifelong achievement.

Summary	Components of Model Policy	Research, Resources, and Model Policies
<p>Modernizing career and technical education (CTE) programs is imperative in preparing students for dynamic workforce demands. By overhauling CTE curriculum, pedagogies, and partnerships, schools and districts will ensure students are equipped with both the technical skills necessary for a specific career path and the Durable Skills that foster lifelong success. It will usher in a future where students thrive in a rapidly evolving workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ States should conduct an in-depth evaluation of existing CTE programs to assess rigor and identify gaps, redundancies, and alignment with emerging industry trends.■ States should revise CTE curricula to integrate Durable Skills alongside technical proficiencies.■ States and districts should establish strategic alliances with local industries, businesses, and trade associations to enhance the validity of CTE programs.■ States should establish an ongoing assessment process to continuously adapt CTE offerings to evolving workforce dynamics.	<p>Model Policies</p> <p><u>Delaware</u></p> <p><u>Louisiana</u></p> <p>State Models</p> <p>Idaho: <u>Career Ready Students Program</u></p> <p>Texas: <u>State Plan for Strengthening CTE</u></p> <p>Resources</p> <p>National Council of State Legislatures: <u>State Policy Landscape</u></p> <p>AdvanceCTE: The State of Career Technical Education: <u>Improving Data Quality and Effectiveness</u></p> <p>Education Commission of the States: <u>50 State-Comparison: Career and Technical Education</u></p>



1390 Lawrence Street, Suite 200, Denver, CO 80204

www.AmericaSucceeds.org • info@AmericaSucceeds.org • [@AmericaSucceeds](https://www.instagram.com/AmericaSucceeds)

