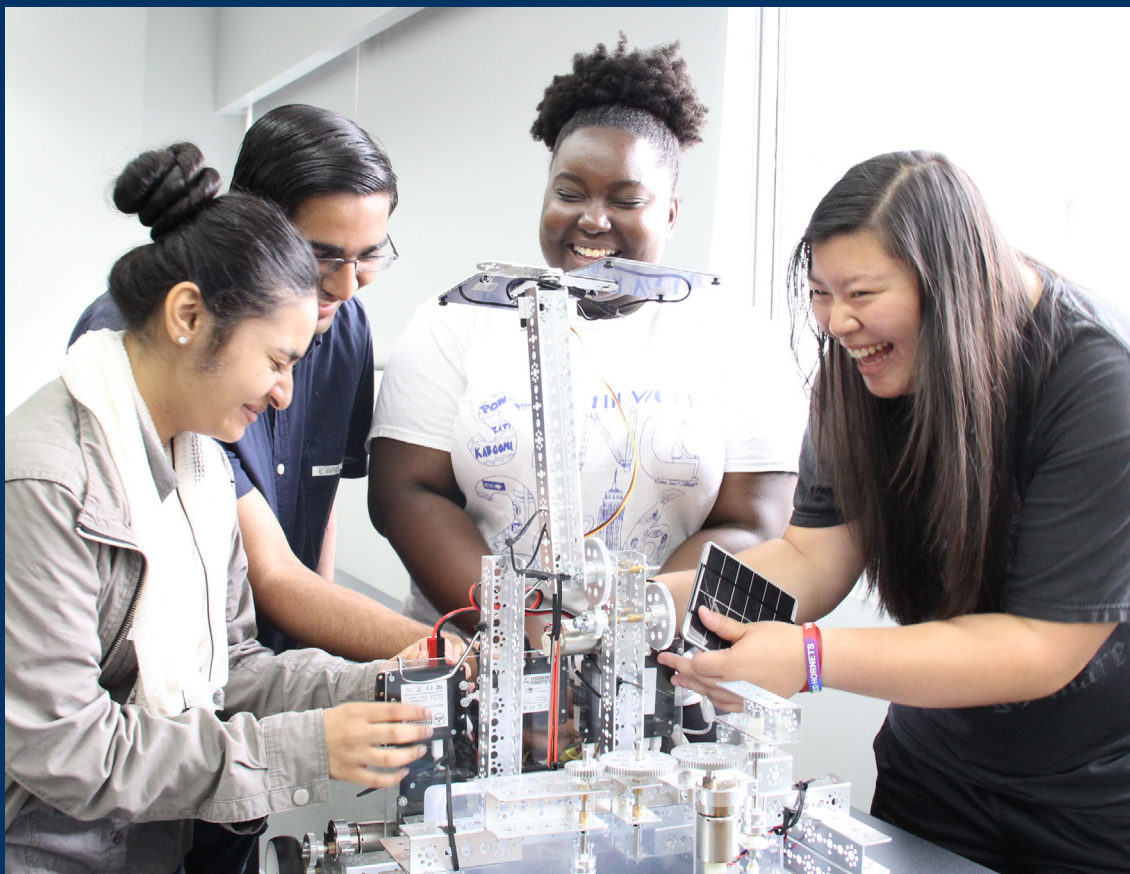




Expanding Postsecondary Readiness Opportunities for All High School Students in New York City

What This Means, Why It Matters, and
How We Can Support It



MARCH 2019

Executive Summary

By better preparing tomorrow’s workers, New York City can strengthen our local economy and reduce long-standing disparities in educational attainment, employment, and wages. The New York City Department of Education and the New York State Education Department have a golden opportunity to lead the nation by creating an exemplary model for what city-wide transitional pathways could and should look like.

To identify opportunities that can advance postsecondary pathways, Expanded Schools convened a coalition of 20 career readiness experts—representatives from the New York City Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Readiness, the City’s Center for Youth Employment, JobsFirstNYC, Futures and Options, HERE to HERE, Hispanic Federation’s LEAD Coalition, New Visions for Public Schools, the Community Service Society, Advocates for Children of New York, The Urban Assembly, The Pinkerton Foundation, and Young Invincibles, along with school administrators, Summer Youth Employment Program providers, and Expanded Options credit-bearing course providers—to develop recommendations for promoting equitable access to quality postsecondary learning experiences. The group held a series of workshops over the spring and summer of 2018 to better understand the challenges to expanding postsecondary readiness in New York City and identify opportunities for change. This brief summarizes our findings and presents our recommendations. The Coalition did not focus its efforts on the business sector’s role in this work, but we recognize that strategic partnering between the school system, schools, and the employer sector, among other entities, is vital. Our recommendations are intended as a starting point to highlight areas where city and state government can lead change efforts.

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) has made incredible strides in recent years, raising graduation rates and pursuing an innovative equity-focused agenda. The groundwork for college and career readiness measures has already been laid through school models like pathways in technology early college high school

(P-TECH 9-14) and career technical education (CTE), initiatives like College Access For All, and opportunities like Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and Training Opportunities Program (TOP).

These career-connected activities help students take a vital first step toward long-term success in the world of work. Unfortunately, access to career opportunities is uneven and quality can vary widely. Universal access to work-based learning (WBL) experiences will support students across a wide range of post-high school pursuits, whether their plans include higher education, employment, or both. High-quality WBL helps young people build social networks and bolster their time management, collaboration, and problem solving skills. Most importantly, wider access to WBL will

NYCDOE and the New York State Education Department (NYSED), can expand postsecondary pathways, improve outcomes and access to jobs by increasing support to allow schools to integrate career readiness and expanding students’ access to the Career Development and Occupational Studies credential.

help more students graduate high school ready to make informed decisions about their own futures, and ultimately to thrive in middle and high wage industries. A system-wide commitment to meaningful career exploration and work readiness for all students will help reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities in high school graduation rates, college completion rates, and employment and earnings outcomes.¹

NYCDOE, along with other city stakeholders like the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and the Center for Youth Employment (CYE), have already proven their dedication to promoting work-based learning opportunities for NYC youth. Many businesses and employers have also supported these efforts. Increasing access to such experiences and activities is the next step to accomplishing this work equitably.

¹ JP Morgan Chase (2018); Symonds, William C., Schwartz, Robert and Ferguson, Ronald E. (2011); Baum, Charles L. & Ruhm, Christopher J. (2014).

NYCDOE and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) can expand postsecondary pathways, improve outcomes and increase access to jobs by further supporting schools to integrate career readiness and expand students' access to the Career Development and Occupational Studies credential.

The coalition identified six core recommendations to meet these goals:

- 1 **Endorse the funding and creation of an office within the NYCDOE** to coordinate all career readiness activities, including technical assistance, programming, professional development, hiring, and curricula;
- 2 **Advocate for increased flexibility in existing programs and contracts** to enable these to support wider and more equitable access to system-wide career readiness;
- 3 **Enable every high school to create an Office for Postsecondary Planning** to monitor and implement strong work-based learning opportunities;
- 4 **Ensure a clear and accessible policy** that allows school-connected, CDOS-aligned, credit bearing, work-based learning experiences with employers throughout New York City;
- 5 **Support the certification of more Work-Based Learning Coordinators and CTE teachers**, through funding and working with New York State to simplify the certification process;²
- 6 **Incentivize CDOS uptake** by integrating CDOS access into comprehensive accountability and planning tools.

However, the NYC DOE and NYSED cannot meet these goals alone. It will take strong cross-sector collaboration at the state and city level, including with the Senate, and Assembly; the New York City Mayor's office, Public Advocate's Office, and City Council; employers, and New York City advocate groups, to expand access to high quality postsecondary readiness opportunities to all students in New York City. We offer these recommendations in the spirit of collaboration and building on strong practices already in place, and with a sense of urgency that all students need these supports for a vibrant future for the City and its young people.

² New York State Education Department- Office of Curriculum and Instruction and Office of Career and Technical Education (CTE). (2018).

PART 2

Background

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), in collaboration with New York State Education Department (NYSED), and other leading stakeholders, has a tremendous opportunity to expand upon existing efforts so that all high schoolers have access to the benefits of career readiness experiences. Career readiness and exploration experiences have proven to increase high school attendance and graduation rates, college readiness, and employability. NYCDOE and the City's Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), along with the state, have already invested in a number of programs working towards these ends, including pathways in technology early college high school (P-TECH 9-14), career technical education (CTE), Career Clue, and Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). However, access to these opportunities are not uniform. Students who do not attend vocationally-based or community high schools are not offered programs like Career Clue or SYEP, and often have little to no formalized access to quality career readiness activities as part of their education.

ExpandedED Schools convened representatives from 20 career readiness organizations, who work across the sector, to develop recommendations for promoting equitable access to quality postsecondary learning experiences.

Current challenges in our city's education system for postsecondary pathways

New York City has achieved promising gains in secondary and postsecondary student outcomes, evidenced by rising high school graduation and college enrollment rates. However, the aggregate picture masks persistent racial and ethnic disparities, in which white and Asian students graduate at higher rates and are more likely to remain enrolled in college than black and Latinx students.

At the same time New York City's students continue to face a challenging job market. While New York City overall has seen a rise in employment rates in post-recession years, "there has been no net increase whatsoever in full-time jobs for eighteen to twenty-four year olds."³ Moreover, those who are employed are earning less. Even as the recession has come to a close and demand for labor has increased, median earnings have decreased for 18-24 year olds. This is true both for

part-time and full-time employees.⁴ Black and Latinx students face the greatest challenges. Unemployment data from 2015 shows that 21 percent of black and 19 percent of Latinx aged eighteen to twenty-four were unemployed, compared to 11 percent of white adolescents. Puerto Rican unemployment rates are the highest of any subset and Dominican rates are similar to those of young people identifying as black, non-Latinx.⁵ (Please see Appendix A for more detail.)

What Students Need to be Successful in a Changing Economy

Every high schooler deserves access to experiences and skill-building opportunities necessary to succeed in the working world. Some students already access programs that offer career support or guidance for college choice that includes career exploration, both independently and through their schools. But to build a strong economy and choice-filled lives for all New Yorkers, every student must have access to school experiences which include:

Career Awareness: Students should engage in activities like workplace tours, hearing from career-themed guest speakers, attending career fairs, and completing career interest inventories that are regularly analyzed by school officials. SYEP, Work Learn Grow (WLG), and In-School Youth (ISY) programs, which are already in place, provide many of the career awareness experiences laid out here.

Career Exploration and Planning: When students engage in activities that make in-school learning relevant to actual jobs, the gap between school and work narrows; students find purpose in the former and gain motivation to achieve requirements necessary for the latter. High schoolers should know how to maximize their current experiences for the purpose of making informed choices and plans for postsecondary life.

Career Preparation: It is important that students gain practical experience in areas particular to their interests and have credit-bearing opportunities to do this. City programs such as Career Clue, SYEP, WLG, Ladders for Leaders, and the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) allow students to build professional networks and prepare for careers.

Career Training: All students deserve to be prepared for their futures, which means having access to training that will prepare them for employment and/or postsecondary education in occupational sectors of their interests. These experiences can and should include internships, like those provided under SYEP or already credit-bearing ones under the Career Exploration Internship Program (CEIP), a registered work-based learning program; service and experiential learning; apprenticeships; work-study, and more. Career training gives students the opportunity to take concrete steps towards accomplishing their post-secondary goals either through earning industry credentials or certifications, enrolling in pre-college academic coursework, obtaining college credits in high school, holding a Career and Technical Education (CTE) endorsement, or earning a Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) graduation credential. Students obtain the technical requirements, foundational skills, and employer relationships necessary to make informed postsecondary decisions regarding work and further education.

^{3,4,5} Treschan, Lazar and Lew, Irene. (2018).

Recommendations

Support Schools to Advance Career Readiness

We recognize that effective career readiness activities require successful, strong collaborations with the business sector, community based organizations, and other leading stakeholders. However, the education system is also crucial to ensuring system-wide career readiness by ensuring that every student has access career readiness activities through their school.

Our recommendations consider opportunities for the NYCDOE and the NYSED to expand access to career readiness, through building on existing successes and infrastructure in the school system. Increasing support, both at the central office level and within public high schools will further schools' capacity to offer opportunities that increase career readiness, such as career exploration and work-based learning.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Endorse the funding and creation of an office within the NYCDOE to coordinate all career readiness activities, including technical assistance, programming, professional development, hiring, and curricula.

These supports should be accessible to individual schools, providers, and networks to create quality work-based learning experiences accessible to all students (general education and those with disabilities) and in accordance with NYSED guidance on work-based learning. This office can clarify programming guidelines and requirements, evaluate and publicize best practices, and advise and partner with leading stakeholders including the Mayor's Office, Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), and the Center for Youth Employment. The office would ensure that the guidance on postsecondary experiences from the state, currently concentrated in CTE, TASC, and Special Education offices, makes its way to non-vocational, non-technical education high schools.

The office, working closely with the NYCDOE's Office of Postsecondary Readiness, would offer supports to all educators, including general education teachers, special education teachers, and CTE teachers. And, its efforts would clearly be for all students, including honors/AP/IB students, multilingual learners, general education students and those with disabilities. It would coordinate efforts across multiple areas of the DOE, while supporting continued expertise in many additional offices that currently play critical roles in supporting work-based learning efforts, including

the Office of Postsecondary Readiness, including the CTE office; Office of Community Schools, with its expertise in community partnership; Academic Policy; and High School Superintendencies.

We recommend that the office's first effort be to create a guiding framework explaining what post-secondary readiness means, what instructional and experiential activities it entails, and how it can be used in accordance with NYSED CDOS regulations and standards.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Advocate for increased flexibility in existing programs and contracts to enable these to support wider and more equitable access to system-wide career readiness.

There are existing structures that need further funding and support to increase equity and access to career readiness opportunities. Specifically, the Mayor and Chancellor could lead efforts to amend partnership contracts with secondary schools, from DYCD or other public or private funders, in order to use existing funds for work-based learning. We recommend specifically amending the following forms: Request for Proposals (RFP), Program Accountability Forms (PAFs) and School Allocation Memos (SAMs).

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Enable every high school to create an Office for Postsecondary Planning to monitor and implement strong work-based learning opportunities.

These offices--evolutions of college guidance offices and made up of Work-Based Learning and/or Postsecondary Readiness Coordinators⁶, CTE and non-CTE certified teachers, and guidance counselors--will ensure students have access to credit and CDOS credential-bearing experiences alongside college counseling. The purpose of this team is to better connect education with employment, opening doors for future career opportunities that could have otherwise remained closed. We envision that the centrally-located office or team at the NYCDOE (as described in Recommendation 1) would provide school-based offices with technical assistance, professional development, and programming guidance.

⁶The term "Work-Based Learning Coordinator" refers to the NYSED-defined term, whereby coordinators must have specific credentials (NYSED, 2018). The term "Postsecondary Readiness Coordinator" is one created by our coalition, whereby a certified teacher or school counselor would be responsible for managing and coordinating the career readiness experiences and activities of his/her school's high school students.

Expand Access to the Career Development and Occupational Studies Credential

Too many students exit high school without learning experiences designed to increase future employment opportunities and family-sustaining wages. These learning experiences also serve to raise grade point averages, increase high school completion rates, lower chronic absenteeism, and strengthen work-academic connectedness overall. The state has already created a structure to provide and credential career development experiences and enhance these outcomes: the Career Development and Occupational Studies credential (CDOS).

CDOS enables students to obtain college and career readiness skills, and is a route to high school graduation, especially where used as +1 to replace a fifth Regents exam. However, many high schools are not aware of or do not value the CDOS as a pathway rigorous enough for their general education students to take. We recommend the NYCDOE expand its use of the NYSED guidelines and CDOS Option 1 standards and requirements for creating, supporting, and evaluating work-based learning experiences.⁷ (Please see Appendix B for additional rationale.)

In order for the CDOS to serve as a propeller of postsecondary readiness development, NYSED and NYCDOE should work together to ensure that all students have access to a CDOS graduation credential by taking the following steps:

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Ensure a clear and accessible policy that allows school-connected, CDOS-aligned, credit bearing, work-based learning experiences with employers throughout New York City.

Students must undertake 216 hours of CTE coursework and/or work-based learning experiences to achieve their CDOS credential. However, many students lack access to credit bearing opportunities to complete this coursework. We recommend the collaboration of

NYCDOE and NYSED, to revise policy to expand the range of credit bearing work-based learning experiences that would make on-time graduation and critical postsecondary skill attainment attainable for more high schoolers in our city.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Support the certification of more Work-Based Learning Coordinators and CTE teachers, through funding and working with New York State to simplify the certification process.

Work-Based Learning Coordinators oversee, coordinate, evaluate, and keep record of all students' work-based learning experiences. Students can only undertake state registered WBL programs (e.g., CEIP), through a Work-Based Learning Coordinator.⁸ Non-registered WBL experiences, while counting towards CDOS WBL hours, are not necessarily credit-bearing and require alignment with DOE academic policy guidelines in addition to CDOS guidelines. Currently, only CTE certified teachers can qualify to teach courses needed to earn CTE credit, which can be used in attainment of a CTE endorsement or attainment of the CDOS credential. Expanding access to Work-Based Learning Coordinators and CTE teachers will give more students the opportunity to undertake high quality, credit-bearing experiences. We recommend both funding to support the certification of more coordinators and teachers and easing of restrictions which limit who can gain a Work-Based Learning Coordinator extension.⁹

We also recognize that a non-registered, locally approved, WBL experiences will continue to be undertaken by many students who do not have access to a certified Work-Based Learning Coordinator. To ensure that these students undertake high quality experiences, the coalition recommends a broader role of Post-Secondary Coordinator. This role could work within the Office for Postsecondary Planning, as detailed in Recommendation 3, and would be responsible for managing and coordinating the career readiness experiences and activities of his/her school's high school students.

⁷ This office/team should use the NYSED Work Experience Manual (2017), the above-mentioned components for a suggested city-level career readiness framework, and the Institute for CTE Schools' Work-based Learning Toolkit.

⁸ New York State Education Department- Office of Curriculum and Instruction and Office of Career and Technical Education (CTE). (2018).

⁹ Currently, not all CTE teachers who have qualified through the Transitional A route, administrators who have only New York State SDS or SDA licenses cannot qualify are not eligible to become Work-Based Learning Coordinators. Guidance Counselors can only qualify for Career Awareness WBL licenses that do not allow off site visits or direct monitoring of internships.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Create additional incentive for schools to offer CDOS credentials by integrating CDOS access into comprehensive accountability and planning tools.

NYCDOE should revise the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), the Principal Performance Review (PPR), and the Quality Review for all high schools, to build engagement and create incentives for making the changes necessary to integrate a strong career readiness framework in each school. Integrating CDOS access into accountability tools, along with the increased support and funding, would mirror the approach taken by New York State's ESSA accountability tools, which gives weighting to CDOS within the College, Career and Civic Readiness Index.¹⁰ NYCDOE can build on the framework provided by the College, Career and Readiness

Index to include specific work-based learning and career readiness targets in NYC Data Quality Snapshots.

As a complement to these changes, we recommend improving accountability and evaluation of CDOS itself. NYCDOE should look to conduct periodic evaluations of WBL experiences to ensure they meet requirements, as defined by the career readiness framework under Recommendation 1. Additionally, improving internal coding and increased coding transparency will offer clarity of pathways through which students graduate, i.e. via the CDOS credential (including Option 1 or Option 2), and allow a more detailed understanding of the long-term outcomes of different pathways.

¹⁰ New York State School Boards Association. (2018).

PART 4

Conclusion

This report focuses on the role of city and state-level education policies and structures. For these recommendations to become a reality, the work of many is required and are not fully entailed here--hardworking students, parents, teachers, and administrators would be pushed to change their aspirations, practices, and work together. Employers and neighboring communities are vital to enhancing work-based learning experiences as well. Prioritization of work-based learning includes a mindset shift across our entire city, whereby employers embrace their roles as pipelines for future leaders and managers. Their prominent place in this work will include welcoming an array

of students from diverse backgrounds into their organizations, requiring workforces to build their capacity around diversity, inclusion, and equity.

But we cannot wait to address the urgent need for a collective commitment to building career readiness and skills that prepare young people for choice-filled lives and life-sustaining and enriching careers. We must work together more effectively to change the high school experience for our City's young people. When more students have experiences engaging in the world of work, the possibilities for them and for our city are endless.

Our coalition offers these recommendations with the goal of working with central staff at the NYCDOE and NYSED, as well as

with young people, parents, teachers, principals and community organizations and employers. This is a working document, and we are inspired by the commitment of so many educators and City supporters to continue to advance partnerships that support youth work-based learning not only over the next few years, but as part of a movement that will shift city systems and structures to support young people and a strong vibrant future for us all. We look forward to working with the NYCDOE and NYSED to spearhead career readiness initiatives that can serve as models for other cities across the state and the nation, and will promote a more inclusive, more financially stable New York City, made up of well educated, qualified, and passionate workers.

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Interviews and Outreach:

- 1 ExpandedED Policy Convening Members. April-July, 2018.**
- 2 Staff from Advocates for Children of New York. February 22 and February 27, 2018 (names intentionally withheld)**
- 3 Staff from the New York State Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education. February-August 2018 (names intentionally withheld).**

Appendix A:

Additional Data

Educational Gaps:

NYC’s student outcomes show a promising rise in high school graduation and college enrollment rates, yet persistent racial and ethnic disparities exist within these results, placing white and Asian students in more advantaged positions than black and Latino students:

1 Overall NYC school system demographics:

1,135,224 students in the NYC school system, 40.5 percent of whom are Hispanic, 26 percent black, 16.1 percent Asian, and 15 percent White.

2 NYC public high school four-year graduation rates:

Overall four year graduation rates have risen from 2013 to 2018, from 66 percent to 76 percent. However, August four year graduation rates (2018) for 72.1 percent for black students and 70.0 percent Hispanic students, compared to 84.2 percent for white students graduation rate and 88.1 percent for Asian students.

3 College enrollment and completion rates for NYC residents:

College enrollment and completion rates for NYC residents ages eighteen to twenty-four have increased from 2005 to 2015, from 71 to 80 percent. At the same time, college non-completion rates have risen from 48,559 to 69,234, though this is a slight fall from the a high of 73,972, in 2012. Latinx students make up a large represent a large and growing share of these students, accounting for 16,444 of the 48,559 in 2005 (33.86 percent), rising steadily to 29,034 of the 69,234 (41.94 percent) students in 2015.

1 College Graduation and Retention Rates for NYS:

NYSED conducted a study of the cohort entering fall 2009 for bachelor’s degree programs and the cohort entering fall 2012 for associate’s degree programs. For every one hundred first time, full-time students pursuing a bachelor’s, seventy-seven African American students returned for their second year and only thirty graduated on time. Seventy-nine Latinx returned for their second year and thirty-four

graduated on time, while eight-four white students returned for their second year and fifty-five graduated on time. For every one-hundred first time, full-time students pursuing an associate’s degree, fifty-five African Americans returned their second year and only seven graduated on time. Sixty-one Latinx students returned for their second year and only eight graduated on time. For white students, these number were sixty-four and fourteen respectively.

Employment Landscape:

Our city’s eighteen to twenty-four year olds are seeing a decrease in median earnings, a disproportionate number of unemployed Black and Latinx, and a rise in part-time, low-wage work, rather than full-time work in middle or high wage industries.

1 Rise in part-time work only:

Eighteen to twenty-four year old full time workers have seen an increase in employment specifically in low-paying industries, up “from twenty percent in 2010 to twenty-three percent in 2015.”

2 Earnings stagnation:

Even as the recession has come to a close and demand for labor has increased, median earnings have decreased for 18-24 year olds. This is true both for part-time employees, who do not have access to full-time salaries, and full-time employees, which may be a product of rises in low-paying industries.

3 Racial/ethnic disparities in employment:

As of 2015 that 21 percent of black and 19 percent of Latinx ages eighteen to twenty-four were unemployed, compared to 11 percent of white adolescents. Puerto Rican unemployment rates are the highest of any subset and Dominican rates are similar to those of young people identifying as black, non-Latinx.

¹¹ New York City Department of Education. (2018)

¹² New York City Department of Education. (2019)

¹³ Treschan, Lazar. (2018).

¹⁴ New York State Education Department. Information and Reporting Services (2016), as cited in The Education Trust- New York (2017).

^{15,16,17,18} Treschan, Lazar and Lew, Irene. (2018).

Appendix B:

Rationale for CDOS expansion

The coalition agreed that CDOS expansion was the most promising avenue for expanding career readiness and work-based learning opportunities. We highlight the following reasons in support of CDOS expansion:

1 The CDOS is already in existence and intended for use by students with and without disabilities.

Although schools vary in how they use the credential, a curriculum and set of resources already exist at NYSED. Additionally, the DOE's have issued updated CDOS FAQ, in September of 2018, providing helpful tools for implementation. Rather than starting from scratch, the CDOS- particularly when used as a +1 for a Regents diploma or as an endorsement to a Regents diploma- provides a vehicle for high schoolers to obtain college and career readiness skills.

2 Option 1 of the CDOS includes clear career readiness standards which align to a career readiness framework and DYCD programs already in existence, like SYEP, Work, Learn Grow, and others.

We recommend using Option 1, which focuses on creating a career plan for each student, work-based learning exploration, awareness, planning, and training driven by youth interests, alongside the development of necessary skills- soft and technical- for obtaining careers and/or further education in those areas of interest. Encouraged through this option is an individualized plan for gaining experiences and participating in activities particular to that student and requiring consistent check ins with and monitoring by a qualified staff member. We believe this will provide a stronger framework for training that Option 2.

3 Many existing teachers are well positioned to fulfill the 216 hours of CTE coursework and/or work-based learning requirement.

CTE certified teachers or classroom teachers certified in one of four specified areas (Technology Education or Industrial Arts, Business and Marketing or Business and Distributive Education, Family and Consumer Science or Home Economics, Agriculture) are able to deliver CDOS coursework or certify requirements. While not all schools are currently able to offer this, schools with classroom certified teachers who have extensive outside work experience in specific sectors can more easily obtain CTE certifications or certifications in one of the four areas for classroom teachers. Our recommendations also look to policy options to support schools to expand the number of certified teachers.

¹⁹ New York State Education Department, (2013).

²⁰ New York State Education Department, P-12: Office of Curriculum and Instruction and Office of Career and Technical Education (CTE). (2018).

²¹ New York State Education Department. (2018).

²² New York State Education Department, Higher Ed. (2018).

Acknowledgements

ExpandedED Schools would like to thank and recognize the following individuals for their ideas, feedback, and support throughout the writing of this brief, including participation in five half-day planning sessions, held between April 23, 2018- July 2, 2018, engaging in workshops, action planning, and presentations:

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK: ASHLEY GRANT

HISPANIC FEDERATION: MARISSA MUNOZ

BEAM CENTER: BRIAN COHEN

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS NETWORK: JOE LUFT

CENTER FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT: DAVID FISCHER AND LEAH HEBERT

JOBSFIRSTNYC: KEVIN STUMP

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY: GREGORY DENIZARD

MIDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL: ERNEST PYSHER

COMMUNITY SERVICE SOCIETY: LAZAR TRESCHAN

NEW VISIONS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS: ANGIE TORRES & ANDREA SOONCHAN

EDUCATIONAL VIDEO CENTER: LAURA SCHEIBER

THE PINKERTON FOUNDATION: LAURIE DIEN AND LUCY FRIEDMAN

FUTURES AND OPTIONS: PATTY MACHIR

THE URBAN ASSEMBLY: LINDSEY DIXON

HENRY STREET SETTLEMENT: MATT PHIFER

YOUNG INVINCIBLES: MARISSA MARTIN

HERE TO HERE: NOEL PARISH AND RICHARD RIVERA

We thank the Office of Post-Secondary Readiness and Center for Youth Employment for providing information to inform our recommendations.



ExpandedED Schools is a nonprofit organization that closes the opportunity gap for youth from under-served communities by increasing access to enriched education experiences. Annually, we build the capacity of hundreds of public schools and community organizations across New York City to offer expanded learning opportunities that support the academic, social, and emotional success of youth of all ages. An innovation hub within the after-school field, ExpandedED employs three central strategies to achieve impact on youth, educators, communities, and the educational system as a whole: 1) Research and development: We design, implement, and evaluate programs aimed at redesigning education to ensure that youth are future-ready; 2) Capacity building: We strengthen teaching and learning through professional development and technical assistance; and 3) Advocacy: We partner with policymakers and influencers to continually shape and strengthen policies that promote educational equity and successful outcomes in school, career, and life.

ExpandedED Schools thanks Deutsche Bank for its support of this brief. This report was authored by Allyson Margolis, Every Hour Counts, with contributions from ExpandedED Schools' Candace Brazier-Thurman, Emma Livingston, and Saskia Traill. For more information or to join the coalition, please contact Candace Brazier-Thurman at cthurman@expandedschools.org.

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