

Middle School ICAP Quality Indicators

Self-Awareness

An understanding of how one's unique interests, talents, and aspirations play a role in decision-making and interpersonal relationships. Individual thoughts and feelings that get students excited about life and learning, and the ability to articulate passions and dreams, including recognizing challenges and potential barriers to attaining goals, and how healthy lifestyles contribute to personal and professional success.

Element 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and personal awareness of their individual talents, interests, hopes, dreams, and passions. Students will (be able to):

- participate in self-discovery exercises/assessments in order to begin the process of uncovering potentially hidden talents, interests, and aspirations;
- identify the unique characteristics and attributes that set her/him apart from other people and allow them to express themselves as individuals;
- articulate, through written essay or other creative work, how her/his unique attributes may contribute to or possibly hinder their academic and/or career success.

Element 2: Students will demonstrate personal understanding of how their mindsets and behaviors impact their personal learning styles, self-management, and social skills. Students will (be able to):

- begin to develop appropriate critical thinking skills to make informed, ethical, and socially responsible decisions regarding their personal wants, needs, and aspirations in relation to their academic and/or postsecondary goals;
- begin to develop effective collaboration and cooperation skills by engaging in extracurricular activities with others who share the same interests, passions, or personal goals for success;
- learn the importance of self-determination and self-discipline and how to apply it to learning in order to enhance her/his aptitude and self-confidence when faced with difficult tasks;
- begin to develop her/his ability to work independently toward achieving an academic or personal goal;
- understand the importance of balancing academic, personal, and community activities in order to achieve a holistic sense of wellness.

Element 3: Students will demonstrate personal awareness and social maturity through the development of positive relationships with peers, teachers, and other adults. Students will (be able to):

- learn how to develop a personal/professional network of adult mentors that they may access for guidance and support when developing career or postsecondary goals;
- participate in specific assessments that identify unique, individual, leadership qualities. Those leadership qualities may be developed and enhanced through practice and self-reflection;
- learn to identify the types of individuals (peers or adults) upon whom they may rely for support in order to effectively transition through challenging situations at home, school, or within their community;
- begin to develop and practice self-advocacy skills and be able to assert themselves through the use of appropriate oral and written communication.

Career Awareness

Knowledge of the difference between jobs, occupations, and careers. Awareness of a wide range of local regional, national, and global career pathways and opportunities while giving consideration to economic, cultural influences, and the impact of stereotypes on career choice.

Element 1: Students will develop knowledge, understanding, and personal awareness about career pathways available in local, regional, national and global arenas. Students will (be able to):

- identify one career pathway that they are interested in while recognizing local, regional, national, and global availability;
- name the career pathways as identified by the Colorado Career Cluster model.

Element 2: Students will be able to explain the influences of culture and stereotypes on career options. Students will (be able to):

- identify a stereotype that causes barriers to a career pathway that they are interested in;
- explain how culture impacts career choices.

Element 3: Students will be able to understand the economic influences and impact on career pathways. Students will (be able to):

- identify how the average salary of a particular career choice may influence their future lifestyle;
- identify and utilize two resources that will inform them about specific career pathways.

Postsecondary Aspirations

Career exploration centered on students' passions, interests, dreams, visions of their future self, and perceived options.

Element 1: Students will participate in activities that allow them to explore occupations based on dreams, passions, and individual interests. Students will (be able to):

- begin to explore and develop a future vision of themselves within the workforce;
- participate in extracurricular activities that support the life interests that relate to their postsecondary vision of themselves.

Element 2: Students will be knowledgeable about members in their community that represent a variety of career pathways. Students will (be able to):

- identify several professionals in their community that hold "real world" careers that are of interest to them;
- identify professionals whose careers are not represented within their local community, but exist in other places.

Element 3: Students will, through guidance and support from their school counselor, parents/caregivers, family members, and community, explore how their dreams and interests translate into career fulfillment. Students will (be able to):

- develop a post-secondary goal, based on the future vision of themselves within the workforce;
- begin to identify how values and academic aspirations support future life needs, wants, and goals.

Postsecondary Options

The awareness of a variety of post-secondary and career opportunities and advancements available using tools such as career clusters, personality assessments and learning style inventories to highlight individual strengths and capabilities.

Element 1: Students will develop a sense of self-awareness by assessing individual motivations, abilities, limitations, interests, and skills. Students will (be able to):

- describe the future visions they have of themselves within the workforce, through a written paper or presentation designed to articulate future goals, dreams, and aspirations;
- identify their individual strengths and challenges, as they relate to academic and/or career success;
- use critical thinking to assess possible career pathways that best fit their skills, abilities, and interests;
- demonstrate the ability to communicate an academic action plan for future goals and achievements based on acquired self-knowledge.

Element 2: Students will become knowledgeable about a variety of post-secondary opportunities including, 2-year and 4-year degree programs, apprenticeships, military service, career and technical colleges, and service-learning programs such as Job Corps. Students will (be able to):

- explore the differences between types of colleges, as well as technical and apprenticeship programs;
- make cognitive connections between personal self-knowledge, self-awareness, and postsecondary opportunities;
- demonstrate the ability to navigate and use tools such as CollegeInColorado.org, among other online resources as determined by the school or district;
- evaluate the potential costs, benefits, and challenges, including personal, social, environmental and/or family implications, of post-secondary opportunities.

Element 3: Students will gain exposure to basic academic and life skills necessary to reach their optimal postsecondary potential. Students will (be able to):

- identify advanced placement opportunities, extra-curricular clubs, organizations and college preparation programs available to them;
- begin to explore the basic vocabulary and information associated with application and interviewing processes;
- begin to explore the application and interviewing process, including how to dress for success, how to study strengths and abilities, and how to communicate verbally and on written assessments.

Element 4: Students will begin to explore their executive processes or self-management skills, including effective reasoning, critical thinking, using logic, forming arguments in a socially acceptable manner, assuming personal responsibility, and managing personal life transitions.

Environmental Expectations

An ecological system in which school, family, community, culture, and world view influence the students' career development and post-secondary plans.

Element 1: Students will understand how their academic environmental resources influence their career choice. Students will (be able to):

- have access to programs and activities, which focus on issues of equitable distribution of resources;
- explore academic resources in their region that minimize academic environmental limitations;
- explore the impact of academic environmental strengths and challenges.

Element 2: Students will explore and begin to participate in extracurricular activities in order to decrease the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors while demonstrating behavior that positively impacts academic, postsecondary, and career options. Students will (be able to):

- explore how their involvement in negative environmental associations would increase the likelihood of negative impact on their academic, postsecondary options, and career choices;
- explore participation in positive environmental resources (community afterschool programs and clubs), which have a beneficial impact on postsecondary and career choices.

Element 3: Students will understand how values and beliefs within multiple environments (school, home, and community) influence future career and other postsecondary options. Students will (be able to):

- explore their cultural and environmental norms, values, and beliefs as they relate to career choice;
- explore their family structural and financial limitations that influence post-secondary and career options;
- explore limitations to their career choice based on their geographical region;
- explore environmental factors that influence their physical, emotional, and mental health in relation to future career choice.

Academic Planning

The skills and knowledge necessary to map out and pass the academic courses required to achieve postsecondary goals.

Element 1: Students will acquire the academic discipline necessary for 8th Grade course completion (*academic discipline* includes organization, planning, and effort). Students will (be able to):

- demonstrate the ability to complete coursework in a timely manner using some type of organizational system (e.g. electronic calendar);
- use appropriate conflict resolution skills on an individual basis, resulting in reduction of disciplinary outcomes;
- demonstrate self-advocacy and self-assertion through use of appropriate communication skills when engaging teachers, parents, and fellow students as issues arise over coursework;
- begin to develop an understanding of how their own academic behaviors and mindsets influence career and college choices such as, setting high academic goals, demonstrating self-discipline, motivating themselves, managing stress, and organizing their lives to get better grades.

Element 2: Students will gain the knowledge and understanding of how the Colorado Common State Standards apply to their potential future career clusters and any other postsecondary options they are interested in pursuing. Students will (be able to):

- explain the importance of communication skills, teamwork, and problem-solving skills in the workplace;
- demonstrate reasoning skills such as critical thinking, using logic, and forming arguments in a socially acceptable manner;
- apply personal responsibility and accountability skills to promote a reduction in their tardiness and absentee rates.

Element 3: Students will understand which courses are necessary to complete graduation requirements in high school to promote individual career readiness. Students will (be able to):

- apply information from her/his personal interests, values, and abilities assessments to select a career cluster;
- select high school coursework that is compatible with their individual career cluster interests;
- gain knowledge and understanding of the challenging coursework that is available to her/him in high school, through concurrent enrollment, Advanced Placement, or other options that align with her/his career aspirations.

Employability Skills

To define, develop, and hone skills that increase the likelihood of becoming and remaining successfully employed and civically responsible citizens.

Element 1: Students are able to locate, access, and utilize various systems in order to gain employability information what skills are needed for particular jobs/careers?). Students will (be able to):

- begin to identify relevant employability systems including: interpersonal, technological, and community;
- explore employability resources within their local, state, national, and international community.

Element 2: Students will be able to identify and develop personal and professional employability traits. Students will (be able to):

- summarize their personal and professional strengths;
- generate realistic goals to enhance their personal and professional traits in relation to a given career pathway.

Element 3: Students will identify and develop essential employability skills. Students will:

- become aware of their academic competencies related to basic employability skills (i.e. math, writing);
- generate goals and an action plan for improving her/his basic employability skills (i.e. math, writing);
- develop an awareness of the impact academics have on her/his future career choices.

Employability Skills

Having an awareness of the cost of postsecondary options and be able to apply this awareness to their personal postsecondary career and academic planning process.

Element 1: Students will complete 8th grade with the financial awareness and preparation essential to meeting the needs for their postsecondary options. Students will (be able to):

- identify the various forms of financial aid, including grants, scholarships, and loans;
- locate and organize financial aid information relevant to their career pathway;
- become familiar with specific financial aid vocabulary.

Element 2: Students will complete 8th grade with the skills to find and apply for federal financial aid to assist them in attending postsecondary options. Students will:

- know what the FASFA is and be able to locate the information necessary to assist them in completing the application process;
- know the purpose of determining the *cost of attendance* (COA) for a particular post-secondary institution, and how it is determined;
- know what *expected family contribution* (EFC) means and how it is calculated.

Element 3: Students will complete 8th grade with knowledge of all financial options available to them through the State of Colorado to pursue postsecondary options. Students will:

- be familiar with *College in Colorado*, and how to utilize it for her/his post-secondary exploration and planning.
- complete their own *Colorado Opportunity Fund* application;
- determine what payment options are best suited to support her/his postsecondary plans, based on their individual environmental, financial, and academic constraints;

Comments, questions, or concerns regarding the standards should be directed to Rhonda Williams, Ed.D., University of Colorado- Colorado Springs (rwilliam@uccs.edu), or Leann Morgan, Ph.D., University of Colorado-Colorado Springs (lmorgan7@uccs.edu).