

ACADEMIC AND CAREER PLANNING

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Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, all Wisconsin public school districts will need to provide academic and career planning services to student in grades 6 through 12; a requirement of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Chapter 26 legislation.

“Academic and Career Planning, or ACP, is a student-driven, adult-supported process in which students create and cultivate their own unique and information-based visions for post-secondary success; obtained through self-exploration, career exploration, and the development of career management and planning skills. (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction <http://dpi.wi.gov/acp>)

The School District of Rhinelander has already begun implementation of academic and career planning. Looking ahead to next school year, the District’s academic and career planning services will meet the new requirements for ‘Education for Employment’, as well as to continue the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model standards with a focus on personalization of learning, opportunities, and experiences. Academic and career planning also links the requirements for a student’s individualized education program, and post-secondary transition plan.’

Academic and career planning is a four-part process for students: **KNOW**, **EXPLORE**, **PLAN**, and **GO**. **KNOW**, the “who am I?” component, entails self-awareness. Students self-assess their individual interests, learning styles, strengths, and skills. **EXPLORE**, the “where do I want to go?” component, focuses on career exploration and educational opportunities. Students explore the 16 career clusters and how to pursue an opportunity after high school graduation. **PLAN**, the “how do I get there?” component, connects middle and high school instructional activities with preparation to enter a particular field of interest. These include high school credit for work-based and community service-based learning opportunities, post-secondary training options, and financial planning pertaining to post-secondary training costs. And, the last component of academic and career planning is **GO**, which puts the student’s plan into action. The plan may involve going directly into the workforce, attending a technical or 4-year college, or pursuing a career through a branch of the armed services.

As a part of planning services, it is required that each 6-12 student has access to an academic and career planning software tool that engages him/her in career exploration, planning, and preparation. Our 6012 students use Xello, an internet-based career exploration planning tool is utilized to students to learn more about themselves and to develop their career plan. Although Xello is an optional software tool, it is at no cost to Wisconsin public school districts. Xello connects a student’s past and future course selections with potential future career options. Each student has a personal Xello account with an e-portfolio, which is created and maintained by the student for their individualized academic, career, and personal aspirations. The student-owned e-portfolio holds self-assessment results, programs of study aligned with high school graduation requirements, personal interests, and individually defined career goals, as well as favorite information on schools and careers. Since it is internet-based, students may access this tool from school, from home, or while on vacation; wherever there is access to the internet.

Students are encouraged to review and modify their plan at any time. A student’s goals and plans may change several times as they gain knowledge and experiences during their middle through high school years. There are not mistakes in the planning process, as students consider the various post-secondary options to pursue. It is all about exploring opportunities that are compatible with a student’s vision for the future.