

LAUNCH NEBRASKA



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Transitions and Planning for the Class of 2021





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Transitions and Planning for the Class of 2021

Educators have been preparing and guiding students to progressively higher levels of achievement, toward completion of graduation requirements, and steps to postsecondary education, training, and/or employment for a long time. COVID-19 is not creating a need for a new program, but it is demanding transitions programs be more intentional and effective. Discovering innovative, solution-focused strategies to teach students how to navigate this unique time so that they graduate high school and successfully transition to postsecondary education is now the challenge for every school district.

Essential Elements for Graduation and Postsecondary Transitions

Throughout a student's time in education, many changes and transitions occur. Students adapt to new teachers, new classrooms, new buildings, new schedules, and new responsibilities while at the same time, mastering rigorous academic content. Students face challenges at each level of academic development, career development, social/emotional development, and need guidance and support to advance successfully. Transitioning from high school and planning for choices of career preparation options (e.g. college, certification trainings, apprenticeships, internships, employment, and/or military, etc.) is one of those times.

Initiate Senior Checklists and Check-ins with Advisors

During this time of educational disruption, it is important that each student in the Class of 2021 have a consistent advisor to meet or connect with regularly through this school year. Positive, trusting relationships with advisors will be a high priority with students and families this year. It is imperative to reach, guide or advise each student in the graduating class. There may be limitations to planning and programming, and realizing current conditions while providing flexible transitions activities is important.

Monitor transcripts, schedules and progress for completing all requirements for high school graduation. Consider contingency plans for disruptions because of COVID-19. Beyond graduation requirements, encourage dual/college credit, career & technical education, and opportunities to enhance college and career readiness. Add additional items recommended in this document to the checklist for transitions activities for the class of 2021.

Include every student in transitions planning, including students who are members of special populations.

School districts have additional federal/state/local programs and agencies to help assist every student including students with disabilities, with transitions to postsecondary education, training, and employment. Recruiting multiple resources and partnerships will increase support for all students. NDE Special Education and Nebraska VR are two of the vital partnerships to offer enhanced transitions services for students with disabilities. Additional resources can be found at:

- Strategies for Special Population Success Practical Tips and Tools for Nebraska Educators: <https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NE-Special-Populations-Brief-FINAL-WEB.pdf>
- Information for Students with Disabilities EducationQuest Foundation: <https://www.educationquest.org/11th-12th-grade-students/information-for-students-with-disabilities/>
- National Technical Assistance Center on Transitions: <https://transitionta.org>
- Nebraska VR: http://www.vr.nebraska.gov/students/for_schools.html

Explore Career Goals to Determine Postsecondary Education & Training

Transition programs are relevant and useful when career development to reach career goals is the main consideration to determine postsecondary goals. Career goals are the essential basis for planning appropriate postsecondary education or training.

- Focus on careers to set goals; students inventory their skills and interests; learn how different jobs connect with those interests and skills; explore career opportunities in current labor markets; and then plan career goals.
 - » Nebraska Career Connections is an online career planning system with occupation information and tools to use to help with career decision-making, goal setting resumes & applications. It is free to NE schools and students at: www.nebraskacareerconnections.org.
- Create a portfolio; a student's collection of documents needed to apply for postsecondary education, scholarships and employment including resumes, applications, assessments, certifications, and transcripts, examples of career readiness skills and references. An e-portfolio included in www.nebraskacareerconnections.org is helpful to being ready for new opportunities or career changes at a moment's notice.

Complete College/Postsecondary Access Activities

Career goals nearly always require additional education or training beyond high school and requires enrollment or application for entry. Transitions programs aim to support every student access to higher education. Schools can help students and families to become knowledgeable of effective strategies to prepare for college and career training options. A valuable partner organization to support schools in these efforts is EducationQuest Foundation. Explore www.educationquest.org for a multitude of ready-to-use resources for schools, students and families for transitions from high school graduation to access postsecondary higher education options.

EducationQuest highlights research-based activities and strategies to improve college/postsecondary going rates of students. Schools are encouraged to employ these activities as a regular part of the college and career readiness/transitions curriculum while tracking student achievement, graduation rates, postsecondary going rates and through to career employment for the school district. Allowing time for active engagement and positive relationships between advisors and students will increase the effectiveness and completion of these activities to improve smooth transitions to postsecondary placement.

Engage students and families in a combination of targeted activities adapted to virtual formats or as needed in your community. Step-by step guides for activities are available from EducationQuest for many of the following college access activities at:

<https://www.educationquest.org/how-to-guide-college-access-grant-activities/>.

The guides include many resources submitted by Nebraska schools who have received college access grants. Additionally find, College-Prep Resources During COVID-19 at:

<https://www.educationquest.org/college-prep-resources-during-covid-19/>.

College/Postsecondary Access Activities:

- Provide timelines & calendar of important activities and due dates for 2020-2021.
- Encourage participation in virtual college & career fairs, which include all postsecondary options, or in person as available.
- Prepare students for qualifying entrance examinations ACT, SAT or others required for training, employment or career requirement.
- Guide students to visit college campuses or career training program virtually or in person as available.
- Offer financial aid presentations and/or information webinars/video.
- Offer video tutorials and appointments with EducationQuest financial aid staff to complete FAFSA-Free Application Federal Student Aid forms online.
- Support completion of scholarship searches and scholarship applications online.
- Assistance with applying for colleges, career training program or employment online.
- Offer transition support and interventions after graduation.



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