# PLAYBOOK:

## ON-TRACK TO CAREER SUCCESS

April 2025

JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of EDUCATION

**EVERYONE GRADUATES CENTER**

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## INTRODUCTION

The **On Track to Career Success (OTCS)** project is an effort to co-create a framework that seamlessly combines elements of high school redesign, youth development and engagement, workforce development, and career preparation and readiness using evidence-based practices that build skills and open pathways to jobs and careers through educational and workplace experiences.

The OTCS project was co-designed with partner schools and communities to support all students, including the most underserved, to build a path to high school graduation, post-secondary schooling and/or training, and a career with a family-supporting wage. The project was launched in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and New Orleans, Louisiana, and serves Black, indigenous, and other students of color in historically underrepresented communities.

The OTCS Framework was designed **WITH** students and educators. They were actively engaged in the development of a system of supports that, when implemented, improves high school graduation rates, especially among our highest needs students, and greatly increases the number of graduates who successfully continue their schooling or training and find employment.

**The OTCS Framework**

MILESTONES

STUDENT SUCCESS SYSTEMS

PATHWAYS TO CAREER SUCCESS
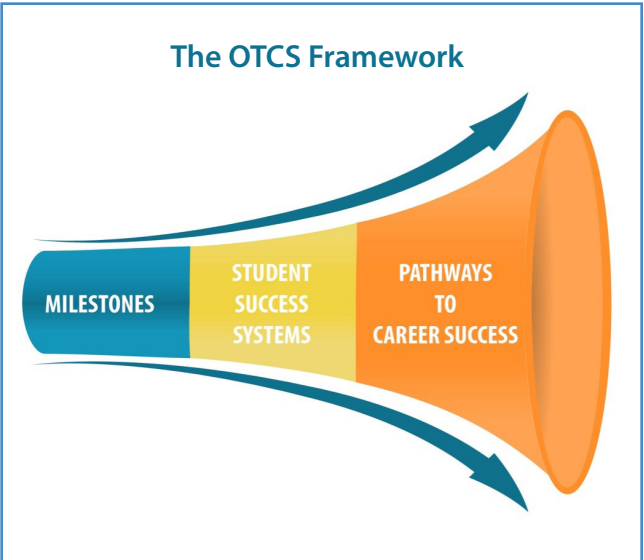
The OTCS Framework was built to counteract and address current challenges and inequities. Its goal is to create equitable outcomes and opportunities for historically underserved students, and to structure and support their experiences, leading to adult career success.

### OTCS PARTNERS

The On Track to Career Success Project relies on a range of key partners that work to imagine, implement, and sustain the project:

- **Schools that take part in the project** are the co-designers and implementers of the OTCS framework, help create the project's infrastructure, and provide support to students in and out of school.

- **Youth at the OTCS schools** help shape the project, provide feedback, and engage in all elements of the model.

- **Local partners** serve as co-designers and help determine how to adapt the framework to meet local needs and opportunities.

- **Implementation partners** provide support for the overall project.

- **The Annie E. Casey Foundation** is the key funder and serves as a convener and co-designer of the OTCS model.

- **The Everyone Graduates Center** at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education serves as the project manager, organizer, co-designer, and technical assistance provider.

- **The National Advisory Panel** includes experts in education and workforce development and funders that provide feedback on tools, processes, and strategy.

**THE OTCS FRAMEWORK HAS THREE KEY ELEMENTS:**

1. **Milestones:** These evidence-based academic, social-emotional, college and career milestones for students in grades 9–12 were developed by the Everyone Graduates Center (EGC) at Johns Hopkins University (along with a cohort of high schools, including OTCS schools) during the 2020–2021 school year. Students who achieve these milestones have high odds of being on track to career success. The milestones underscore the journey of a young person in high school to their post-secondary life, which includes social-emotional and academic development, supportive and guiding relationships with caring adults, and post-secondary preparations. Each school community works together to create localized versions of the milestones.

2. **Student Success Systems (SSS):** A key tool is an "early warning system" in grades 9–12. In this system, student success teams monitor all students' progress on three well-established predictive indicators of high school graduation and college attainment: attendance, behavior and engagement, and course performance. The goal is to promote higher order ABCs of student success, which are grounded in research and experience: agency, belonging, and connectedness. These are deeply connected to the academic, social-emotional, and college and career milestones OTCS schools have customized to their own situations. This leads to the most critical actions the student success teams take: developing, monitoring, and improving individual, grade-level, and school-wide actions and responses to keep all students on the path to career success.

3. **Pathways to Career Success:** This element requires work with school and community partners to move toward providing all students with a series of college and career explorations, experiences, applications, and engagements, such as college visits, job-shadowing, dual credit courses, work-based learning, and industry certifications. These are provided in grades 9–12 and tracked as part of the SSS. A key factor is working with local nonprofit, higher education, community, and employer partners to establish sufficient pathways to career success so that all students have one, and student/family/community goals can be aligned with local opportunities.

Local customization is essential for the **OTCS Framework** to meet the needs of the students and adults in a community. All schools follow different paths in implementing the framework as the process, partners, and specific approaches are dependent on who and what is available in each community.

Key components of this framework may be delivered by a student's high school, post-secondary school, training institution, intermediary organization, employer, or a combination of these partners. Decisions are made locally as to where these experiences occur, what funding is available to support them, and who leads them.

Some experiences may be provided by implementing, localizing, and weaving together existing school and/or community programs. An asset analysis of the industries, job market, and future investment opportunities in each community informs career pathway possibilities in that school and community, as well as academic course offerings that may be pertinent to local careers.

As you and your team, teachers, and systems begin to interact with the OTCS Framework, it is important to include the context and wisdom of your local school system. The OTCS Framework is designed to support agency, belonging, and connectedness for all students through a culture of dignity focusing on individualized support to ensure the well-being and success of the students served as they follow their own paths to career success.

# OTCS SCHOOLS

## NEW MEXICO

**Robert F. Kennedy Charter School** is located in the South Valley of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Its vision is to be a school where every student can engage in their chosen path toward secondary education or a career in an environment that prepares, motivates, and supports them and their families. *Student demographics*: Hispanic: 95%; other races/unknown: 5%

**Mark Armijo Academy**, in the South Valley of Albuquerque, New Mexico, has a mission to provide a quality and relevant education in a community that promotes caring and belonging for all students, especially those who seek a more personal and innovative educational setting. *Student demographics*: Hispanic: 99%, African American: <1%

**The Grants Cibola County Schools district** is located in Grants, New Mexico, encompassing several communities in the surrounding areas, and is the only school district in Cibola County. The district collaborates closely with three area pueblos/tribes: Baca/Prewitt Chapter, the Pueblo of Laguna, and the Pueblo of Acoma and in conjunction with the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education, the tribal government of Acoma and Laguna, the Pueblo of Acoma Department of Education. *Student demographics*: Hispanic: 40.6%, Native American: 44.8%, White: 14.6%

## LOUISIANA
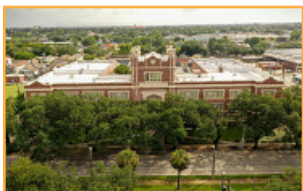
**Warren Easton Charter High School,** located in the heart of New Orleans, is the oldest public high school in Louisiana. WECHS is an independent, open-enrollment charter that serves students from more than 50 middle schools. Easton's mission is "to provide rigorous and relevant instruction for all students at all academic levels to ensure each has the opportunity to achieve maximum potential." *Student demographics*: African American: 97.5%; Hispanic: 2.1%; White: 0.2%

**International High School of New Orleans** (IHSNO) is an open admissions public charter school founded in 2009, with an enrollment of about 400 students. IHSNO's mission is to educate and nurture a diverse learning community through the International Baccalaureate programme, foreign language instruction, and intercultural appreciation that prepare students to succeed in a global economy. *Student demographics*: African American: 58%; Hispanic: 33%; White: 5%. 25% of students are English Language Learners and 85.2% are economically disadvantaged.

**L.B Landry High School** is an open admissions public school located on the West Bank of New Orleans in the historic neighborhood of Algiers. L.B. Landry High School was the first school to enroll African American students in Algiers. Landry's mission is to provide students with the academic and life skills necessary for success in local and global communities. *Student demographics*: African American: 99%

## HOW DID WE COLLABORATE?

We worked closely with the students, teachers, school leaders, community, and higher education partners of each school. We built relationships that included thought partnership and coaching because coaching is how we need to collaborate with educators to ensure customized, personalized student success. As in most relationships, we get more when we invest in others professionally and personally, and build sustainable partnerships. An educator's role is complex and stressful, so establishing a trusting relationship with a thought partner may support the school's vision, plan of action, and purpose. People thrive when they are involved in meaningful relationships that lead to co-creation and self-reflection, not told what to do. Building trust, displaying empathy, and developing relationships are therefore encouraged through the practice of patience, dependability, and flexibility as a coach or thought partner.

The following list shows how we became embedded in the fiber of each school in New Mexico as much more than a partner. We're part of the family, engaged in all aspects of the school.



**Relationships and Listening are Well-Being Essentials**

Warren Easton students and staff shared their experiences at Be Loud co-create spaces.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORTS AND COLLABORATION

- Attend Community Council meetings
- Alignment Team: Work with stakeholders and partners to align efforts within the school (Portrait of a Graduate, online portfolio, capstone, OTCS)
- Attend and participate in Guns to Gardens events and community gatherings
- Albuquerque Interfaith: Attend professional development
- Field trips to universities: Chaperone and attend field trips
- Participate in Senator Discussion Forums regarding health centers for schools
- Family and stakeholder dinner night: Attend and support with setting up events
- Attend and support with student online portfolio showcase events and capstone projects
- Participate in interviews and provide support in designing interview questions
- Attend meetings with the city to support efforts of restoration practices and social emotional learning efforts
- Participate in Equity Council monthly meetings
- Attend professional learning sessions through NM PED with school teams
- Support school teams with family FAFSA information and application events
- Board meeting attendance and presentations to update on process of OTCS

- SkillzUSA: Attend and present at CTE conferences and attend events with students
- Women in Trades presentation and participation with middle school students
- Attendance Team member: Meet bi-weekly, including community liaison
- Community Council Board Member: Attend monthly meetings
- Neighborhood Association Meetings: Attend monthly meetings and participate in events
- Hispanic Act meetings and collaboration attendance with Senator Lopez
- Governing Council Board meetings: Attend, present, and participate monthly
- SWIFT Community Schools collaboration and alignment of efforts; attend all meetings
- Family and Community Nights: Attend and support with setting up discussion panels and focus groups
- Alumni Focus groups: Design questions with staff and reach out to former students
- Future Focus Education: Attend meetings and conferences to align efforts of OTCS and innovation grant
- Attend and meet with community school coordinators to learn about drivers to align efforts
- Cultural and community celebration events

While there are many similarities to the work in New Mexico, our approach in New Orleans was different because the charter landscape in New Orleans is different. There, we chose to foster district partners to disseminate information, working with the executive director of district-wide programming for New Orleans Public Schools. We did things such as send a monthly newsletter to charter school leaders and establish partnerships with Louisiana's community and technical colleges.

Early in the recruitment stage we understood the need to be more strategic about what pieces of the OTCS Framework to highlight. Despite some leadership and teacher collaboration, we weren't in a position in New Orleans to begin with coaching or become embedded in each school's community. We had to start with building a shared understanding of what makes a high-quality Student Success System (SSS). Through collaborative design and professional learning sessions at each campus, we built the foundation to support each school team as they designed an ecosystem that addresses the needs on their specific campus.

The chart below lists some of these sessions with key objectives.

| Topic | Focus |
|---|---|
| **Listen and Learn Tours** | In these campus visits, we observe and listen to understand how teachers and students experience school. With school teams, we identify the foundational SSS elements in place and choose improvement and SSS design actions. |
| **Student Success System 101** | This session builds a shared understanding of key components of a high-quality SSS by allowing participants to connect current early warning systems (EWS), on-track multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), or other student support systems to a high-quality SSS. |
| **School Visits: Promising Practices** | Talent Development Secondary (TDS) facilitated a visit to New Mexico to learn from a school that has been designing and improving their high-quality SSS for 2.5 years with strong student outcomes. |
| **Brain Awareness** | One of the research-based predictive indicators in an SSS is behavior. This session highlights the relationship between behavior and other indicators, and gives educators tools and strategies to maintain their own ability to self-regulate and to address the frequency and severity of violence and other negative student behaviors on campus. |
| **Student Success Meeting** | This describes a framework and protocols that allow an interdisciplinary team of teachers who share a majority of students to monitor and identify root causes for student indicators while designing interventions that address their root causes. |
| **Equitable Grading Practices** | Since students and educators identified inequitable grading practices as a root cause for many students failing or lacking motivation to attend class, this session guides teachers to examine grading practices that encourage or inhibit equity. They also examine research- and evidence-based practices and consider their assessment practices, comparing them to examples from TDS partner schools with equitable grading practices. |
| **Student Engagement** | This session addresses a root cause (lack of student engagement in daily instruction) identified during Listen and Learn. Teachers and staff work in collaboration to design cross-curricular lessons to boost student engagement in their classrooms. |

## PLAYBOOK INTRODUCTION & DESIGN

This **Playbook** is designed primarily for secondary schools and their community organizations, higher education peers, and workforce partners. Our hope is that the Playbook serves as a practical and applicable resource for most types of school settings, including those that serve students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Playbook is the result of engaging students and educators in the process of design thinking while aiming for greater equity through co-creation. The Playbook seeks to honor and value the voices of the students, families, community members, and school-based educators who collaborated with us in implementing elements of the **OTCS** with their communities.

The Playbook reflects collaborations with stakeholders across languages (English and Spanish), ethnic and racial identities, gender identity, age, and educational backgrounds (i.e., college- and non-college-educated caregivers). Furthermore, the Playbook highlights how students were able to articulate their perspectives and co-direct collective activities in co-designing the unique pathways for their school's new learning environments.

The Playbook can be used as a guide for customized support and coaching of the **OTCS Framework** while adjusting for the realities of each landscape. You can co-design the paths that work best for your community as the Playbook offers tools and resources that help build the skills and capacities of students, educators, parents, and partners to enact the OTCS Framework.

The Playbook celebrates and lifts up best practices. It acknowledges that the wisdom is with the students and educators in your buildings who will be co-designing new pathways to adult success based on your local context. The best system for your school/district will be the one you co-create together.

**Each section in the Playbook has four recurring themes that share the story of our collaborations and how you might use them with your community.**

### Introduction
The introduction helps define and provide knowledge about the topic.

### Ideas in Action
Our Ideas in Action are the stories of how we collaborated with students, educators, and communities to co-create pathways to career success. These co-created pathways help students build agency, belonging, and connectedness for themselves, their peers, and their communities for the years ahead.

### How Might You Engage Your Team?
You can't move forward without taking a first step. This section is designed to give suggestions and share ideas for where to start. Remember: you need the insights of those you're designing for to get started.

### Tools and Resources
This section shares some of the tools and resources our schools and their partners found helpful in co-designing and implementing elements of the OTCS Framework.

### Introduction

Strong relationships are the key factor in collaborating successfully with educational partners, their students, and the communities that support them. We can only provide tools and resources that are targeted to each school's specific needs once we know each school's full story.

We've worked through the process of principals and superintendents changing, teachers leaving and starting, district personnel shifting, student and staff trauma, and school rating changes, just to name a few challenges. This proves that flexibility and adaptability are crucial, as are relationships across the school system, not just with one or two people.

Providing training for adults in adjusting to these sorts of changes is as important as providing help for students. When confronting these issues, we engaged with the staff at our schools, using trauma training and transition journey mapping to help them notice, name, and navigate each situation. This work helped with mindset because part of design thinking is trying something new, testing it, modifying the test based on feedback, and trying it again.

Consistent communication is also a core function of our success. Using scheduled meetings, running notes, PowerPoint resources, and in-person meetings, we're able to be in touch on an as-needed basis to support the changing environments that are a part of school life.
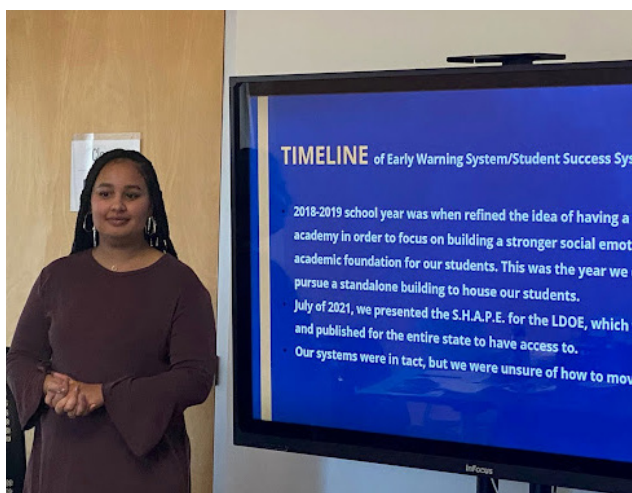
### Conditions for Success in Action

Learning about the community you're stepping into is essential if you want to bring together multiple stakeholder groups. Before engaging in meaningful partnership work, you must establish relationships. Part of that process is looking at the community and its school system through the lens of each person in it to understand what career pathways they need. In the case of the OTCS initiative, transparent discussions and deep listening are required upfront to build the strong relationships needed for this work.

One way in which we've established relationships is by conducting Listen and Learn tours. For each tour, we went to campus before the start of school and observed how students and teachers arrived. We then visited classrooms and conducted listening sessions with them. We experienced having lunch on campus and saw what



*Members of the Warren Easton team deliver their presentation about OTCS activities at their school.*

Another way that we've established relationships is by connecting potential partners with other schools. In October of 2022, TDS invited Warren Easton Charter High School, several New Mexico–based OTCS partners, and others to visit Manzano High School in Albuquerque. Manzano High School had been engaged in student success work for more than two years at the time and was ready to share their findings. In addition, Warren Easton participated in an OTCS cross-state meeting where they presented and listened to the experiences of their New Mexico partners.

To engage with the OTCS Framework, students and the educators supporting them worked on defining their values and understanding what skills they'd gain through our collaboration. This helped build the trust and appreciation of diverse perspectives that are key to any relationship.

happens when students are late to class. All of this work was necessary to understand what they dealt with daily so that we could enter our relationship as a true partner.

One powerful way that RFK Charter High School engaged with their community was by hosting a Community Concerns Cafe. The students planned and hosted the cafe as a place of learning to inform each other of community needs that could potentially be tied to their senior capstone projects. Students, teachers, and staff worked together to identify potential participants from the community. Outreach included emails, phone calls, and announcements at other community meetings. The cafe inspired participants to share, listen, and collaborate.

The RFK Community Concerns Cafe is held in the school gymnasium.

## BUILDING OUR SKILLS
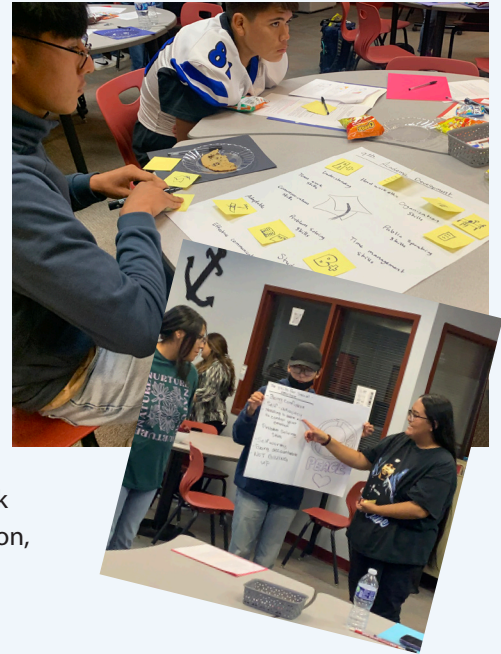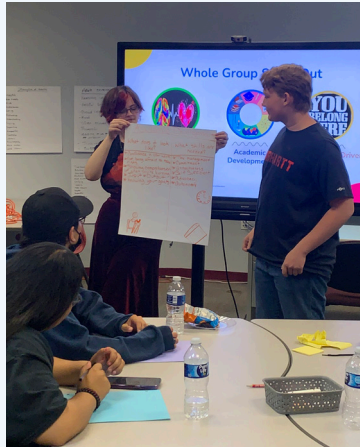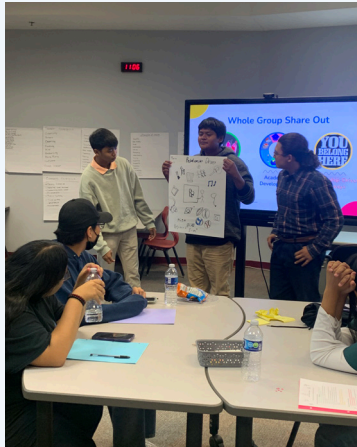


The Grants Cibola County Schools' (GCCS) student design teams work to develop the skills of collaboration, problem solving, communication, delegation, goal setting, time management, building relationships, community outreach, and civic engagement.

The GCCSI student design teams identify student, adult, and community strengths.

| What are the strengths of our students? | What are the strengths of the adults in our school buildings? | What are the strengths of our community? |
|---|---|---|
| • Accountable<br>• Supportive<br>• Dependable<br>• Traditional<br>• Caring and creative<br>• Open-minded | • Thoughtful<br>• Trustworthy<br>• Protective<br>• Forgiving<br>• Understanding<br>• Have high expectations<br>• Loyal | • Accepting<br>• Involved<br>• Protective<br>• Hard working<br>• Tight knit<br>• Prideful<br>• Fierce |
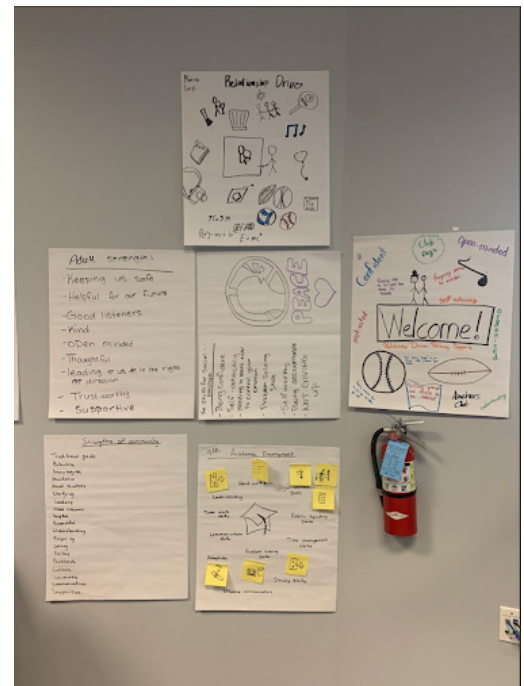
The GCCS student design teams analyze and customize the national milestones.

## DEVELOPING A VISION

The RFK community went through several iterations of their vision as they collaborated with their stakeholders.

Flexibility and adaptations are necessary:

- Customizing OTCS Milestones
- Weaving in life stories of guest speakers
- Building pathways
- Context changes




*RFK's vision continues to evolve.*

## COMMON LEARNINGS

Through team-building activities such as the spaghetti tower marshmallow challenge, GCCS explored common learnings and developed collective values.



| Common Learnings |
| --- |
| • **Clear Vision:** Develop a shared understanding of what needs to be achieved. <br> • **Communication:** A core function to success. <br> • **Culture of Error:** Try something new, test it and try again! |

| Our Collective Values |
| --- |
| • **Altruism:** To go out of your way to help others without expecting things in return. <br> • **Commitment:** Staying dedicated and having the will to do something you set your mind to. <br> • **Respect:** Showing gratitude and the ability to treat others the way you want to be treated. <br> • **Confidence:** The ability to express yourself without fear of judgment. <br> • **Balance:** Spreading many factors out equally and fairly among the vast world of factors. |

### How Might You Engage Your Team to Establish the Conditions for Success in Your School/District?

When building a team to engage with the OTCS Framework, you are looking for people who have the ability to connect with others and/or have some of the following abilities:

- An asset-based thinker.
- A student-centered mindset.
- The ability to foster open, authentic relationships.
- Effective communication skills.
- Tolerance for taking risks.

Below are a few questions you can go over as a team to help in setting the conditions for success at your school.

1. Why are you interested in the OTCS Framework?
2. Why and how will it benefit our students?
3. What conditions for success fit the context of your school?
4. How will you engage with your school based on this context?
5. Identify the successful practices you already have in place that will help build out and sustain the key elements of the OTCS Framework.
6. What examples of grassroots approaches have worked for your system in the past? How can you use some of these skills when thinking about moving the OTCS Framework forward?
7. How will students and the community be involved in the planning process to ensure equitable power structures?
8. What obstacles might you encounter when engaging with the OTCS Framework (i.e., hierarchical power dynamics, leadership changes, etc.)?

### Tools and Resources

**Book**: *Dancing with Discomfort*, **Carey Borkoski**
This book offers a framework for navigating transitions in life by noticing, naming, and navigating our in-between moments. The book invites us to embrace dissonance and leverage moments (expected or unexpected) during transitions. Borkoski's insights are applicable in classrooms, boardrooms, and our personal lives.

**Powerpoint: Values**

**Book:** *Switch*, **Chip and Dan Heath**
The authors shed new light on how we can effect transformative change by telling a compelling narrative supported by years of research in psychology, sociology, and other social fields. The book shows that successful changes follow a pattern that you can use to implement changes that are important to you, whatever your goal.

**Powerpoint: Circles**

**Team-building activities: Spaghetti tower marshmallow challenge**

**Book:** *Grading for Equity*, **Joe Feldman**
In this book, the author addresses the ambiguity and inequities that are baked into secondary grading practices. Recognizing the challenges associated with shifting mindsets around learning and assessment, *Grading for Equity* offers tools and strategies that produce a fairer, more transparent approach to grading.

**Book:** *Connections Over Compliance*, **Lori Desautels**
In this book, the author provides a wealth of neuroscience-informed tools and strategies that address inequities in the application of discipline in schools. She also offers evidence-based approaches that effectively address the needs of students post-pandemic.

### Introduction

Evidence-based academic, social-emotional, and college and career milestones for high school students were developed by the Everyone Graduates Center (EGC) at Johns Hopkins University, along with a cohort of high schools (including OTCS schools) during the 2020–2021 school year. This cohort represents educators from Louisiana, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Mississippi, and Virginia in a variety of roles, including state-level leaders, district administrators, principals, other school leaders, teachers, counselors, and coaches.

Students who reach these milestones have higher odds of being on track to career success. The milestones underscore the journey a young person makes from high school to their post-secondary life, which includes social-emotional and academic development, supportive and guiding relationships with caring adults, and supported post-secondary experiences such as exposure to college and career options. Each OTCS school community worked together to create localized versions of the milestones.
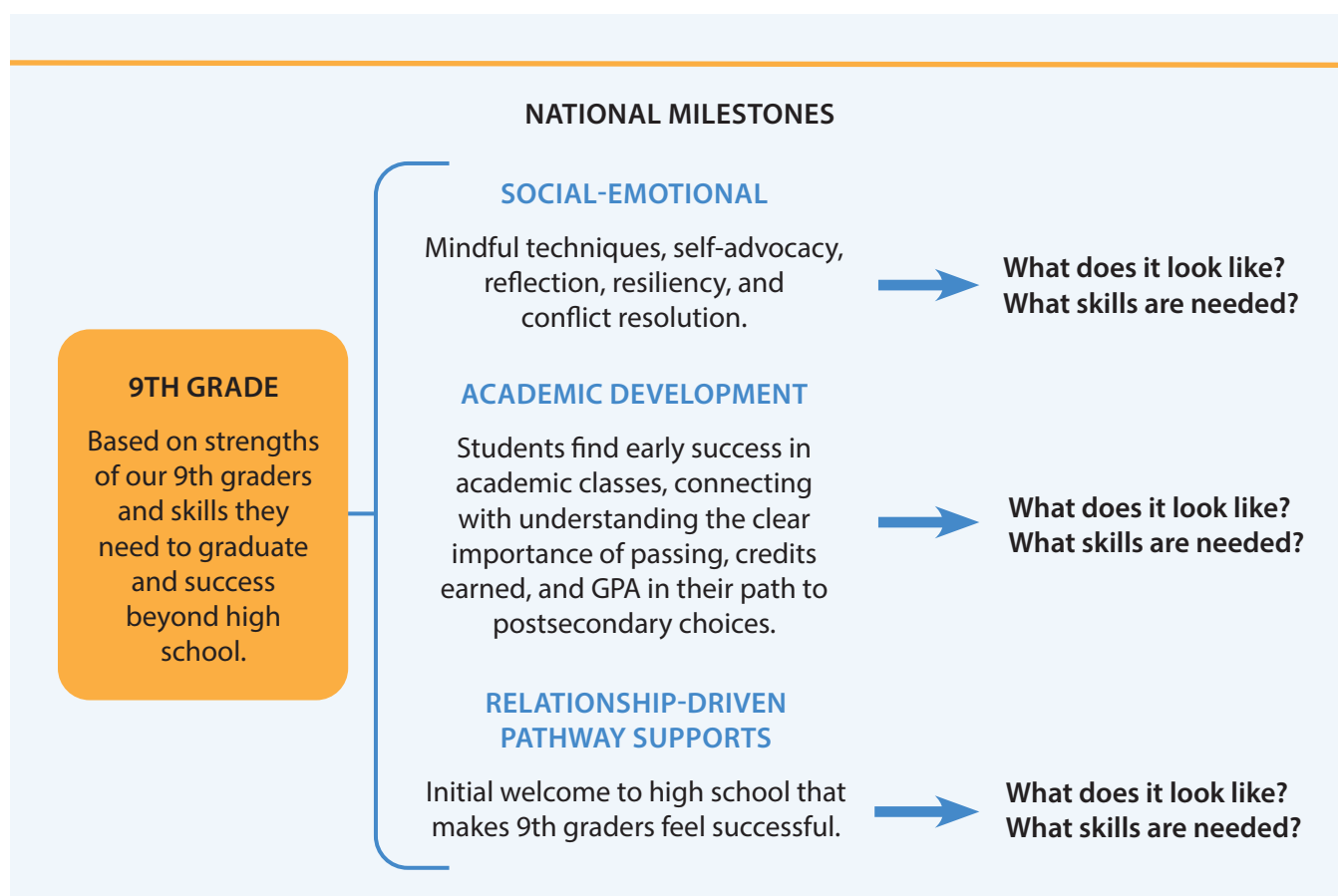
### The Milestones in Action

Each school unpacked the milestones to determine which were the right fit for their community and adjusted the language to fit with the context of the district. All local milestones were co-created with the students and presented to the broader school community.

The GCCS community was interested in the national milestones and wondered how they could use the milestones to ensure their students were prepared for post–high school success.

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**NATIONAL MILESTONES**

**9TH GRADE**

Based on strengths of our 9th graders and skills they need to graduate and success beyond high school.

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL**

Mindful techniques, self-advocacy, reflection, resiliency, and conflict resolution.

→ **What does it look like? What skills are needed?**

**ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Students find early success in academic classes, connecting with understanding the clear importance of passing, credits earned, and GPA in their path to postsecondary choices.

→ **What does it look like? What skills are needed?**

**RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN PATHWAY SUPPORTS**

Initial welcome to high school that makes 9th graders feel successful.

→ **What does it look like? What skills are needed?**

We began working with both schools, combining the student design team from each into one design team at the students' request. The students customized the milestones and then developed their own profile of a graduate. Although the superintendent has since retired, working with the students has remained a priority for the new administration. Today, the GCCS student design team is composed of 25 high school students, six student success advisors, and the EGC team.

**Profile of a Graduate**

Guided by student voices, a grad partnership design team composed of members of the nine grad partnership partners, American Institute for Research, Building Assets, Reducing Risks-BARR, Carnegie Foundation, National Center for Learning Disabilities, Network for College Success–University of Chicago, Talent Development Secondary, Rural Schools Collaborative, Schott Foundation for Public Education, and the Everyone Graduates Center–Johns Hopkins University, is integrating OTCS milestones into the SSS's post-secondary framework. The resulting post-secondary framework will become part of the grad partnership's SSS, which is and will continue to be widely disseminated.
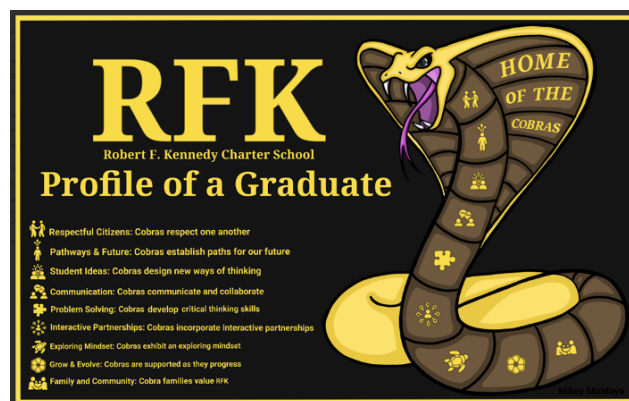


Profile of a graduate work is being widely adopted by school districts across the nation to provide schools with a means to identify the attributes of a high school graduate. Incorporating the OTCS milestones framework and co-creation/student voice approach provides a mechanism to attain those outcomes over the four years of high school.

RFK's student design team has actively participated in the process of integrating the OTCS milestone into their profile of a graduate. The ongoing work of OTCS schools in New Mexico will inform and shape student-led videos as well as an easy-to-access National Milestone two-pager reference, to be used by school districts across the nation.

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## CREATING THE PROFILE OF A GRADUATE AT RFK

### Cultural Elements

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Persistence
- Shared Leadership
- Diversity

### Essential Beliefs

- Our health and well-being matters.
- We keep trying, even when it's hard.
- Everyone deserves and is capable of success.
- We can make a difference in our community and the world.

### Core Values

- **Respect**: We honor and promote kindness, diversity, care, and trust within our community and for the environment.
- **Patience**: We provide thoughtful and individualized support and connections at the pace at which students learn and grow best.
- **Community**: We celebrate the assets across our community and work as a partner in service to all. Our success is connected and reliant on our love and care for one another.
- **Growth**: We are a community of open-minded learners. We believe that by working hard, we can learn, develop, and succeed.
- **Trust**: We trust ourselves and one another to always do our best and adhere to the shared beliefs and values of our school community.

### How Might You Engage Your Team on Milestones?

1. Connect with your design team of students and adults.

2. Share a copy of the milestones.

3. Decide how you want to use the milestones to impact your school community in a transformative, sustainable way.

4. Share the milestones background.

5. Cross-reference graduation requirements with the milestones.

6. Review each milestone for shared understanding.

7. Modify milestones with student-friendly language as needed, and determine which milestones match which grade level based on your school's context.

8. Share your milestones with all of your stakeholder groups (administrators, families, community groups, etc.) for input and feedback.

9. Determine how and where students can collect evidence of milestone completion.

10. Begin milestone implementation.

### Tools and Resources

Learn more about **National Milestones**

Review the **Power Point on Milestones**

Learn more about **Liberatory Design**

### Introduction

A student success system (SSS) is a way of organizing a school community to better support the academic progress, college and career transitions, and well-being of all students. By focusing on relationships, actionable data, and evidence-based practices, each SSS helps educators and communities build a sense of belonging and school connection among students, address school-wide achievement patterns, and meet individual student needs.

### STUDENT SUCCESS SYSTEMS COMBINE FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

**Strong, Supportive Relationships**

**Real-time, Actionable, Holistic Data**

**Strategic Improvement Actions**

**Student-centered Mindset**

**STRONG, SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**: High-quality SSSs build upon and strengthen supportive relationships. Four types of supportive relationships provide the foundation for student and school success: school adults and students, students and students, school adults and school adults, and school adults and parents/caregivers. These relationships depend on a school culture of belonging where everyone feels validated, accepted, affirmed, and treated fairly.

**Student to Student**

Example: Students are provided opportunities to collaborate in class and in extracurriculars that collectively enable all students to participate in peer-based activities.

**School Adult to Student**

Example: Structures that provide time, place, and opportunities for students and teachers to form supportive relationships, e.g. advisories, houses, interest inventories, working together

**Strong, Supportive Relationships**

**School Adult to Families**

Example: We have structures that enable co-creation and two-way communication, e.g. design thinking sessions, charrettes, conversation cafes.
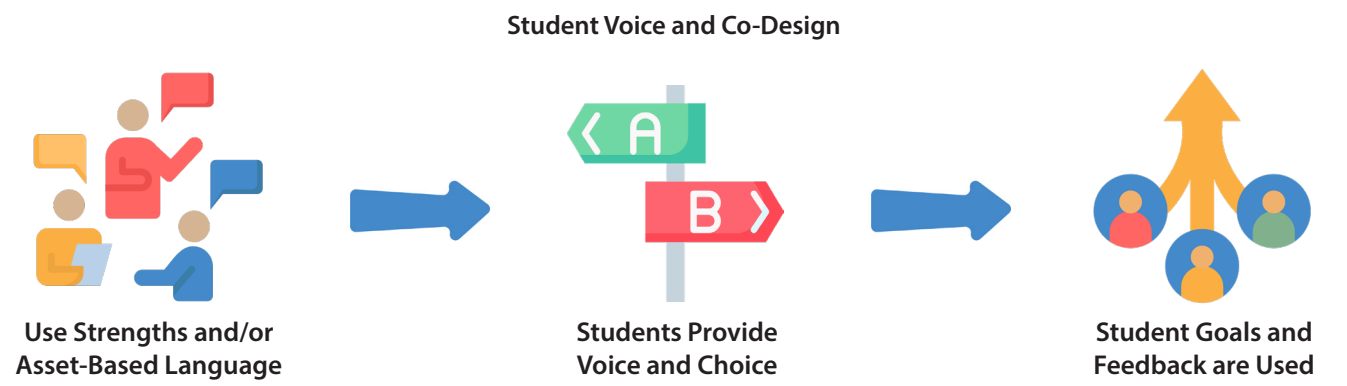
**School Adult to School Adult**

Example: There are structures for staff to meet, collaborate, design, and develop plans for student success.

**HOLISTIC, REAL-TIME, ACTIONABLE DATA**: School teams need access to research-based, predictive indicators that are continually available at the student and teacher level throughout the year, in as close to real time as possible.

| Quantitative Data | Qualitative Data |
|---|---|
| Anything that can be counted, measured, or given a numerical value. | Non-numerical data that reflects individuals' social reality, including their attitudes, beliefs, and motivation. |
| • Attendance<br>• Grades<br>• Extracurricular participation<br>• Close-ended survey responses from school climate and social-emotional learning | • Themes from focus groups, listening sessions, and interviews with students, families, and communities<br>• Open-ended survey responses<br>• Pooling teacher's everyday knowledge of their students |

**ADAPTABLE ANALYSIS, RESPONSE, AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM**: An SSS uses regular assessments of holistic data to develop strategic action that is student-centered, adapted to local context, and involves students, teachers, and community members. An adaptive analysis, response, and improvement system is supported by professional learning, as well as by frameworks and/or protocols that enable teams of adults connected with students to work collectively and regularly to co-design improvement efforts. Actions and supports can be at the district, school, grade, classroom, student sub-group, or individual level.

**Student Voice and Co-Design**

**Use Strengths and/or Asset-Based Language** → **Students Provide Voice and Choice** → **Student Goals and Feedback are Used**

**SHARED, STUDENT-CENTERED MINDSETS:** Each SSS and the actions student success teams co-create with their community are fueled by a shared set of student-centered mindsets. These mindsets form the shared understanding of why an SSS is needed and valued by the school community. They both propel and shape the SSS, and vice versa. Mindsets cannot be mandated: they arise through dialogue, reflection, and shared experience. To best support students, all the adults must share a common set of attitudes and beliefs respecting the whole child.
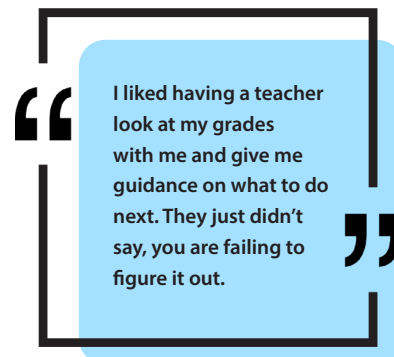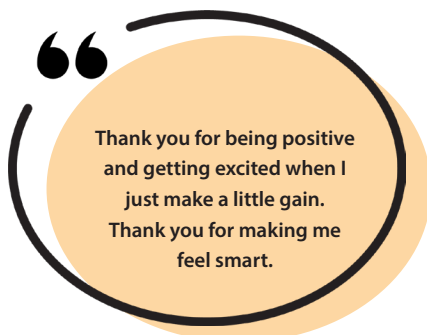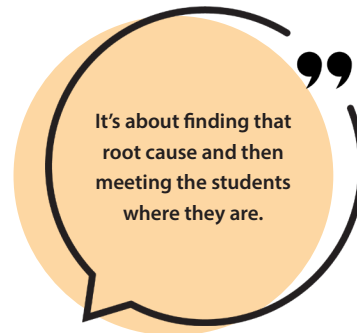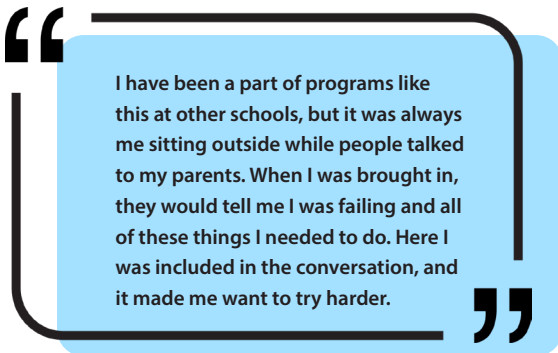
## Student Success Systems in Action

TDS collaborated with Manzano High School in Albuquerque during the 2021–2022 school year when staff members earned certification as early warning systems coordinators from the Johns Hopkins University School of Education EGC. It was during the certification process that Manzano High School was identified by TDS as an exemplary site for designing an SSS based on engagement and level of implementation during the project, as well as positive impacts on student outcomes.

When chronic absenteeism surged during the pandemic in Albuquerque—as it did across the country—Manzano High School knew family engagement would be key for removing barriers to attendance. In November 2022, Manzano convened parents, educators, students, and community representatives for a family resource night. Students who were considered chronically absent by the district were invited, along with their families, to connect with a plethora of school, community, and district resources.

The family engagement manager for Albuquerque Public Schools kicked off the evening, saying, "Let's keep getting them to school so that they have the best chance to realize their dreams. We can do it by partnering together." Nearly 200 families gathered to focus on this challenge, access resources, and make connections. Translators were on hand for all seven languages spoken at Manzano. Health partner Oak Street Health provided 75 vaccines for a number of viruses from flu to COVID, advice for housing and rental assistance was available, and other resources like free or low-cost internet or assistance signing up for Medicaid were accessible too.

Family engagement is core to Manzano's SSS. One essential component is supportive relationships between educators, students, parents/families/caregivers, and the community. To ensure students' success, a culture of working with collective support and shared responsibility is required. Manzano's early warning system coordinator noted, "This event really helped build trust with the parents. We are still building those relationships, but I think they will be more ready to call, to help us be more proactive."

### MHS Voices

"I have been a part of programs like this at other schools, but it was always me sitting outside while people talked to my parents. When I was brought in, they would tell me I was failing and all of these things I needed to do. Here I was included in the conversation, and it made me want to try harder.

"It's about finding that root cause and then meeting the students where they are.

"Thank you for being positive and getting excited when I just make a little gain. Thank you for making me feel smart.

"I liked having a teacher look at my grades with me and give me guidance on what to do next. They just didn't say, you are failing to figure it out.

### How Might You Engage Your Team with an SSS?

Your team can engage with the GRAD Partnership's District and School **team reflection and action planning tools** that use a set of questions to guide inquiry, potential data sources, and related "look fors" that focus on key attributes of an effective SSS. These tools are intended to spark conversations that lead to reflection, collaboration, and innovation.

We understand that creating an SSS that enables your school to provide the learning environment, experiences, relationships, and supports all students need to thrive is an ongoing, adaptive process, especially since school and community capacities and student needs continually shift.

The team reflection and action planning tools are designed as a guide to support student success teams as they create, operate, and continually improve their SSS. There is a team reflection tool for schools to use and another version of the tool for school district personnel. When the tools are first being used by a student success team or the full school community, each of the four sections could involve two hours of reflection, analysis, and discussion, so they might be best spread over several sessions. The complete reflection and planning tool can be used on an annual basis, with individual sections or subsections employed more frequently by the student success team or the larger school community to facilitate continuous improvement.

For district leaders, it's important to foster the conditions that enable self-reflection and continuous improvement for schools. By promoting honest and productive self-reflection and supporting and modeling these practices, school teams can further develop their classroom and school-wide practices. In addition, district leaders can use these tools to look across the schools they support to learn and leverage each school's strengths within the district and to coordinate support across schools.

For example, schools within the same district have varying needs, so by investigating their school-level data, district leaders can differentiate their support by school. They can coordinate within and across departments and teams to ensure that work is streamlined and ownership of decision-making is clear and well communicated.

This district resource was created to:

- enable district leadership teams to consider the strengths and areas for improvement within and across the schools they support;
- identify patterns of student and adult needs to enable effective and scalable research and evidence-based strategies;
- create opportunities for school leadership teams to learn from and with one another; and
- reflect and act on the changes the leadership team can make to create the conditions for school team success.

Investigate the **General Resource page from the GRAD Partnership**. You can filter the resources by the following categories: Agency, Attendance, Belonging, Connectedness, Course Performance, Relationships, Research, Tools, and Well-Being.

### Tools and Resources

Explore the **The Grad Partnership: Team Reflection and Action Planning Tools**

Learn more about **The Grad Partnership Resources**

### Introduction

The **Pathways to Career Success** element requires school and community partners to expand opportunities for all students to receive support in exploring college and career options and accessing meaningful workplace experiences. A range of support is vital, including help with applications, college visits, job shadowing, dual-credit coursework to help students get early college credits, work-based learning, and instruction leading to industry certifications. Such supports are offered across grades 9–12 and tracked as part of the SSS. Partnerships with local nonprofits, higher education institutions, community members, and employers are all critically necessary to establish these pathways.

For each student to become a successful adult, we need to ensure that they and the adults in their school community regularly experience agency, belonging, and connectedness. When students and adults in a school are able to shape their learning experiences and school climate, welcomed and wanted for who they are, and strongly connected to school, then they are able to fully and deeply engage with each other and create a school where everyone wants to be. This enables learning and educational attainment.

Pathways to Career Success helps schools, their systems, and communities to enable all youth, regardless of their circumstances, to complete secondary schooling
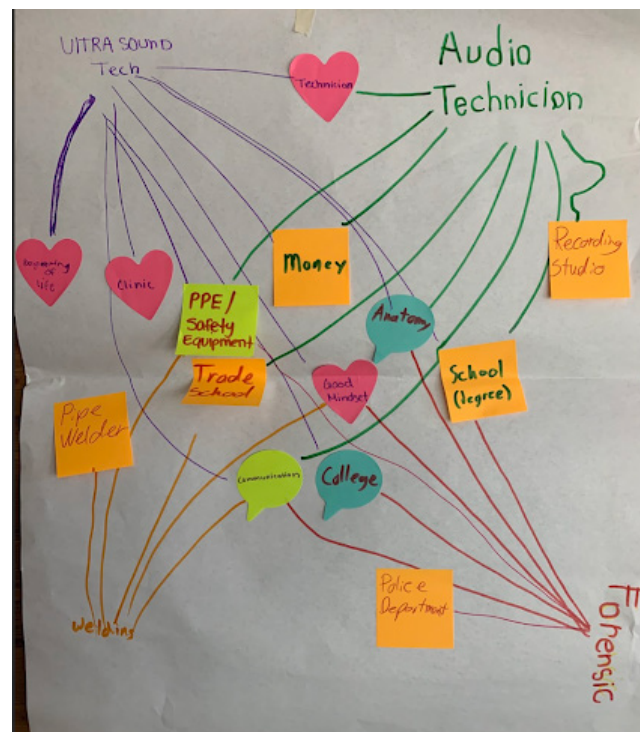


*Pathways co-designed by students in New Mexico.*

and a post-secondary pathway that leads to a family-supporting wage and adult success. We provide the link between our mission and fostering those connections in schools via a culture of trust, equity, and diversity. As we collaborate with schools and communities to build pathways to adult success for all students, the OTCS framework offers the opportunity to inform participants' mindsets and actions.

## Pathways to Career Success in Action

The chart below shares how each OTCS school in New Mexico is providing college and career opportunities for their students.

| School | College | Career | Experiences and Exposure | On the Horizon |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RFK | • UNM, CNM, Santa Fe Indian Arts visits<br>• Dual Credit courses offered<br>• FASFA nights and introduction to courses offered at universities for families and students | • Mock interviews with students for career readiness<br>• Work-based learning for students occurs in pathways | • C&C Day planning through the student design team<br>• NMSU interest survey and program used to support college and career exploration<br>• Online portfolios demonstrating/ tracking growth throughout high school<br>• YCC farm and service learning through Guns to Gardens<br>• Guest speakers every Friday rotation | • Potential to expand to 13th grade, discussions within leadership meetings for next semester. Focus on readiness skills and PD to support transitions. |
| GCCS | • NMSU Dual Credit courses offered | • CTE pathways beginning in 9th grade as a path to credentials | | • District reached out for recommendation to contract person to oversee internships |
| MAA | • UNM, CNM site visits<br>• Dual Credit courses offered<br>• All senior students apply to CNM | • Internships within school<br>• YCC Grant recipient, several partners<br>• Work-based learning offered to students | • Quarterly conversations with students via counselors through progress monitoring of ewis<br>• Advisory discussions and exploration redesign of this space<br>• YCC Grant with partner of Cottonwood Gulch<br>• Alumni Focus group to gather information on postsecondary readiness | • Innovation grant to expand internships outside of school with local businesses, hired personnel to support this effort |

The chart and photos below are representative of the various pathways and certifications available to the students at Grants High School in GCCS.

| Agriculture Pathway | |
|---|---|
| Agricultural Business | HS Diploma and General Business with AG Coursework |
| Veterinarian Assistant | HS Diploma and Vet. Asst. Certificate |
| Veterinarian Technology | HS Diploma and 41 credits toward a Vet Tech Associates Degree (41/76-80 total) |
| Partners | Eastern NM University, NMSU Grants Cibola County Extension |
| Student Organization | Future Farmers of America, Skills USA |

| Education Pathway | |
|---|---|
| Early Childhood Education | Education Assistant (EA)/Substitute License |
| Early Childhood Education | HS Diploma. ECE Associates Degree, EA/Substitute license |
| Education | HS Diploma, Education Associates Degree, EA/Substitute License |
| Partners | New Mexico State University, Grants Branch, Grants Public Library |
| Student Organization | Educators Rising |

| Health Science Pathway | |
|---|---|
| Phlebotomist | HS Diploma, Phlebotomist Certificate |
| EMS Basic | HS Diploma, EMS Basic Certificate |
| Health Careers | HS Diploma, Health Careers Certificate |
| EMS Intermediate | HS Diploma, EMS Associate Degree |
| Partners | New Mexico State University, Grants Branch, Cibola General Hospital, Dialysis Clinic, Inc. |
| Student Organization | HOSA-Future Health Professionals |

| Manufacturing and Business Pathway | |
|---|---|
| Business Retail and Merchandising Services | HS Diploma, Business Retail Merchandising Services Certificate, Daniels Fund Ethics Program Certificate |
| Hospitality and Tourism | HS Diploma, Hospitality and Tourism Certificate, and Daniels Fund Ethics Program Certificate |
| Hospitality, Tourism, and Restaurant Management | HS Diploma, Hospitality, Tourism, and Restaurant Management Certificate, Serve Safe Certificate, ProStart Certificate, Daniels Fund Ethics Program Certificate |
| Automation and Manufacturing | HS Diploma, Automation and Manufacturing Certificate, OSHA 10, General Industry Certificate |
| Partners | New Mexico State University, Grants Branch, Acoma Business Enterprises, Chamber of Commerce |
| Student Organizations | DECA, Skills USA |

## POST-SECONDARY EXPERIENCES AND EXPLORATION

Examples include:

- GHS explorations in agriculture, health science, manufacturing and business, science and technology, vocational trades, and education
- Focus Group with Alum students from MAA
- All students apply for CNM through Advisory
- UNM representatives visit every student and assist in applying for a variety of colleges
- Future Focus Education partnership will begin to develop internship opportunities
- CNM students at Student Design Sessions
- CNM design session at university campus
- College and Career Day
- FASFA night
- EXPLORA! Guest speakers on Fridays
- UNM and Institute of American Indian Arts visit RFK campus
- Holland Interest Survey
- Online portfolio career exploration with NMSU program in Advisory
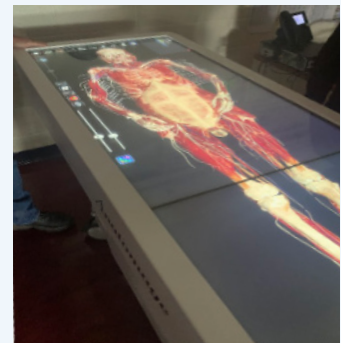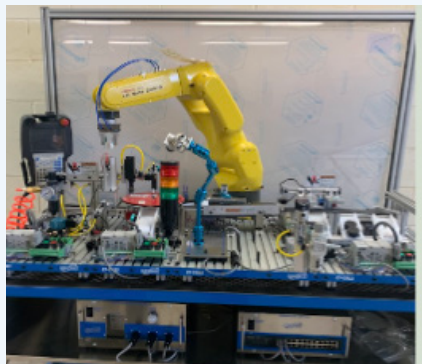
### How Might You Engage Your Team with Pathways to Career Success?

This is a multi-dimensional journey based on the context of your school or system, exemplified by our OTCS schools as shared in the prior section.

**Examples:**

- Schools can collaborate and design career and college fairs.
- Schools can participate in internships and apprenticeships.
- Schools can visit colleges with students so they can picture themselves attending school there.
- Schools can collaborate with higher ed campuses to develop career awareness and job support and training opportunities.
- Schools can have senior capstone project projects.

**For each example, you could try the following:**

- Form a team to collect data through empathy interviews to better understand what careers and pathways students would like to see offered.
- Provide time for the student design team to identify opportunities based on student interest through surveys to other students, focus groups, alumni conversations, and advisory discussions.
- Go on site visits to other schools to learn from their experiences.
- Integrate yourself into the community through participation in events hosted by community business and nonprofit partners.
- Invite alumni currently attending college to visit campus to talk to students.
- Host a **community cafe**.
- Find community partners to support your vision through community connections.

### Tools and Resources

Learn about **Laguna Acoma Jr/Sr High School: CTE Pathways**

Explore **GCCS District Pathways**

Read the **New Mexico Career Clusters Guide**

Read an example process of **setting up college visits and a career fair day**

Explore **Innovation in New Mexico: Capstone Projects and Graduate Profiles as Pathways to Student Success**

Learn about **Pathways to Adult Success**

Explore **Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions Dashboard | U.S. Department of Labor**

Learn about **Career Waves 1 Portal**

### Introduction

The OTCS started with students building agency in their school spaces while adults supported their efforts. Centering students was unique not only for the schools that were involved, but for the field of education itself. Something special was unfolding, and it could be felt throughout our network.

Thus, student agency is the key design element in how the OTCS Framework is brought to life with students in our OTCS schools. Student voice serves as the common thread through all elements of the OTCS Framework. OTCS unfolded with *students at the center* of all collaborations, and as part of the process, students shared their truths about their school experiences. We then used the OTCS Framework as a foundation for co-designing new Pathways to Adult Success.

Now we co-create new systems for success with students as co-designers on every step of the journey. Adults with student-centered mindsets ensure that the students have agency and the chance to build leadership.

As OTCS collaborators, students become leaders of change as they seek to open new avenues of student expression through their participation, activism, and leadership. They shape new trajectories for their communities and the students who follow in their footsteps. When students have a seat at the table, their diverse perspectives and stories are included.

When students are lifted up and listened to, they have influence, and people are beginning to take notice not only in the schools we serve, but across New Mexico and New Orleans. Our schools are being invited to share their journeys at a national level, and our partners at TDS are being tapped by larger districts to guide student-directed paths toward success.

### Student Voice in Action

RFK Charter High School is beginning to expand its efforts to RFK Charter Middle School to develop a pipeline for adult career success beginning in the middle years. The students and adults at the middle school co-designed a project to explore careers. Students investigated careers of interest, considering job outlooks, lifestyle impacts, and preparation required for these careers. They developed skills in online research, note-taking, speaking, and listening. These efforts resulted in a mini–career fair designed and hosted by the students for the adults and other students. It was a full circle moment for the leaders and designers at RFK.
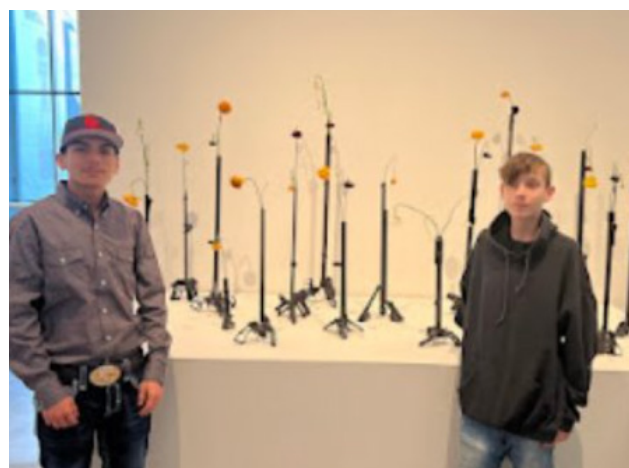


*Guns to Gardens Project at RFK High School*

RFK also models triumph over tragedy with the project Guns to Gardens, which students co-designed as a way to repurpose the guns that have caused so much pain and trauma in their community. This project led to local and state advocacy. The students were invited to the Roundhouse in Santa Fe by the governor to speak about their project when new gun legislation was being signed into law. It was an outstanding way to engage in civic service for their community. The students aren't stopping with this project, either: next year they will refurbish gun metals into guitars with a local artist.

**RFK Charter School's student-created gun violence prevention mural. Read local news coverage.**

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT RFK



Read **NPR article** on gun safety that mentions RFK's work.

Another example of our authentic engagement with students was gathering their voices through a program in New Orleans called **Be Loud Studios**. This nonprofit amplifies kids' confidence through radio production. Being loud means showing up, creating something different, being curious, and being assertive. Whether with a microphone or a camera, Be Loud trusts youth to be creators and not solely consumers, and to hold space to practice their loudness. Be Loud believes kids' ideas, opinions, and perspectives are real, relevant, and worthy of expression through the art of podcasting. With Be Loud, students found their voices and connected with the community, building their self-confidence and allowing them the freedom of self-expression. Thanks to a Pass the Mic Fellowship, teachers can gain the skills and equipment to co-design and co-create podcasts with their students. Several teachers from Warren Easton, L.B. Landry, and International high schools engaged in the Pass the Mic Fellowship. The teachers implemented what they learned in their classrooms with students who created multiple recordings and podcasts.

In the words of our students and fellow collaborators, this is the beginning of a new way of being with each other where relationships and trust come first, and people are more important than the outcomes.

## LOOKING TO NEW SOLUTIONS

A focus on leading with equity and student voice, with Be Loud serving as a structure for student voice capstone projects.

| How many students participated in the capstone class during the first semester? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Day School | Night School | Total Participants |
| 9th | — | 8 | 8 |
| 10th | — | 10 | 10 |
| 11th | 7 | 7 | 14 |
| 12th | 7 | 7 | 14 |
| **Total** | **14** | **32** | **46** |

**First semester objective**: Capstone students demonstrated competency by building out at Community Action Project. Each student identified a community issue and worked toward helping to solve that issue. In addition, each student demonstrated leadership and communication skills throughout the semester.

Each student had the opportunity to show mastery in the following learning outcomes in the Learning Outcomes Rubric:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Discovery Process** | Understands concepts and processes associated with successful Idea Generation. This included Discovery, Concept Development, Resourcing, and Actualization. |
| **Community Action Project Student Traits/Behaviors** | Understand the personal traits/behaviors associated with successful performance. This includes Leadership, Personal Assessment, and Personal Management. |
| **Communications and Interpersonal Skills** | Understands concepts, strategies, and systems needed to interact effectively with others. This includes Fundamentals of Communication and Group Communications. |
| **Digital Skills** | Understands concepts and procedures needed for basic computer operations. This includes Computer Basics and Computer Applications. |

Second semester Capstone students will continue to build their Community Action Project toward the actual launch of their platform. They will have an overview of their project, a website, social media presence, promotional video, and promotional materials. Additionally, students will focus on economics, financial literacy, marketing, and operations management as it pertains to their platform.

**COLLEGE AND CAREER STUDENT DESIGN SESSIONS**
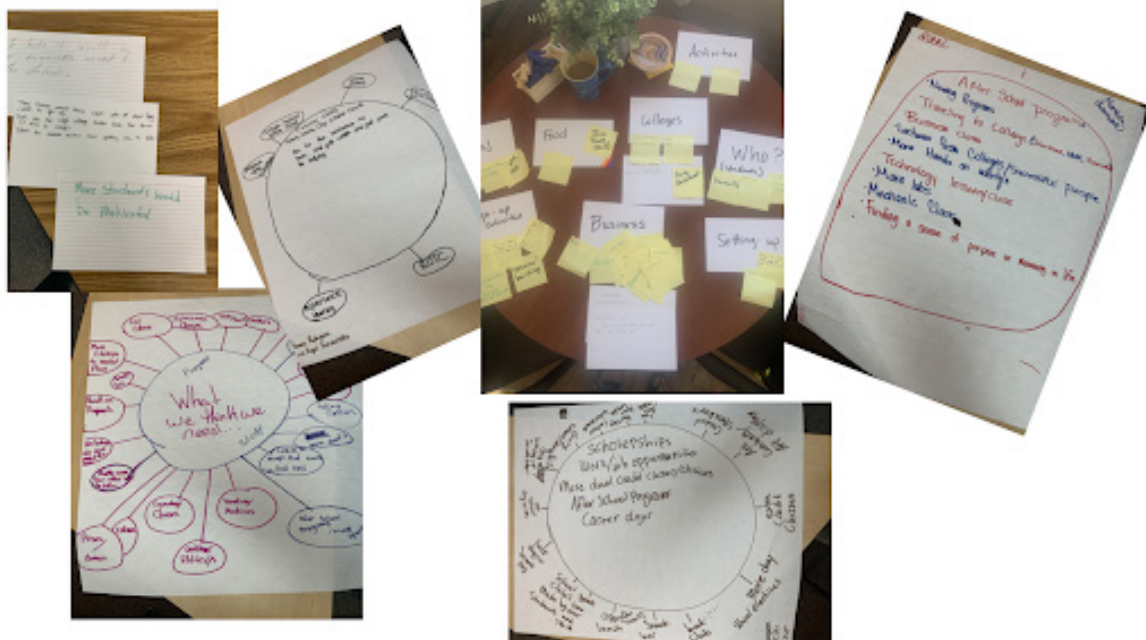
### How Might You Form a Student Design Team?

- Ensure all diversities of the student body are represented. The team could be teacher nominated or student self-identified, but it should be a fair representation of students at the margins of your school.

- Find a group of adults or an adult at the school who is willing to participate in and coordinate with the school and the design team.

- Meet with the administration and consider topics such as having student-centered mindsets, being open to risk-taking, and having the willingness to share power with and not over others.

- Build relationships with the students by being vulnerable and not having all of the answers.

- Hold design thinking sessions to engage with students.

- Be consistent when meeting with your team, and always starting and ending with connection circles.

- Enjoy this uncharted journey!

### Tools and Resources

Read report: **Motivation, Engagement and Student Voice**

Visit **Continuum of Voice: What It Means for the Learner**

Learn more: **Introduction to Liberatory Design**

Read more about **Connection Circles: How to Get Started Building Trust**

Visit the **International Institute for Restorative Practices**

Learn about **Building Community with Restorative Circles**

Read report: **Elevating Student Voice in Education**

Learn more about **Be Loud Studios**

Watch **Restorative Practices: Introduction on YouTube**

Watch **Community Forward: Justice Circle on YouTube**

Learn more: **Starting Design Thinking Student Session #1**

### Introduction

The practice of equity-centered design, known as liberatory design, invites participants (designers) to be more self-aware, inclusive, and inspired to co-create. It incorporates approaches that allow the educators involved to notice and reflect on the identities, experiences, and biases we all bring to every context and relationship we're designing with while embracing our human complexities. It creates the space to build, learn, and prototype.

The process of engaging with students and educators with the OTCS Framework is driven by liberatory design to ensure that equity, student voice, and innovation promote agency, belonging, and connectedness.

Our student designers begin by noticing that what one brings to any person and any context allows for authentic, human-centered design. Only then are we able to co-create and empathize with humility, curiosity, and courage.

During the sessions, students engaged in empathy interviews to better understand the wisdom in their schools through understanding each other's thoughts, emotions, and motivations. After reviewing the empathy interview protocol, our designers interviewed each other. The designers took notes and shared them with everyone as we collectively built an empathy map, using our platform to illustrate our findings and reflections. In addition, we included components from the **dignity framework** (core competencies, indicators of dignity) to underscore dignity and belonging as keys to equity implementation.
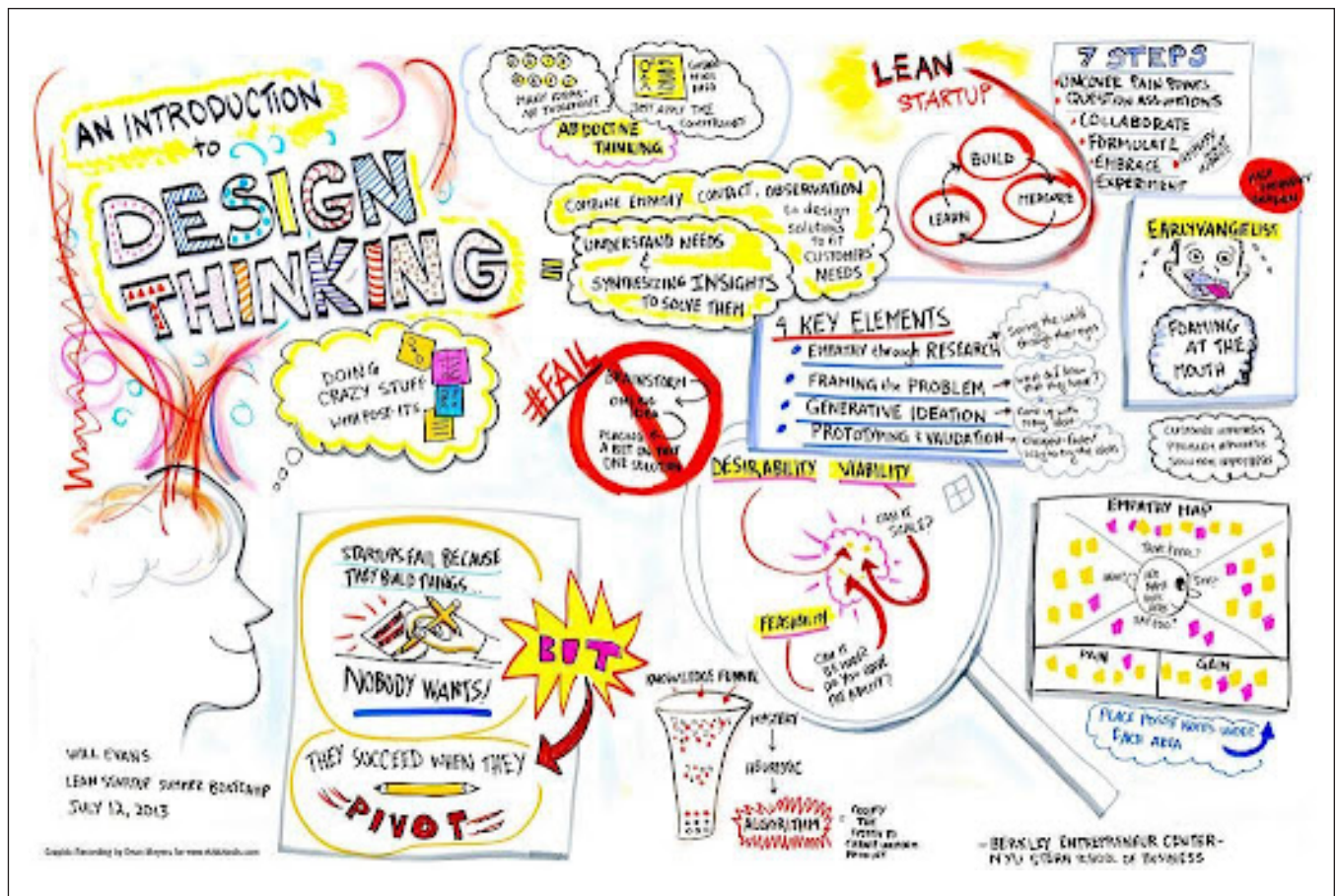
### Design Thinking in Action

Educators participating in the OTCS Whole Child Milestones Design Series co-created using the [liberatory design process](#) from the [National Equity Project](#). The design and structure were driven by liberatory design, ensuring that equity is at the center of the OTCS Whole Child Milestones Design Series. The design series was focused on the contributions, reflections, and learnings shared by participants.

A student design team was developed from the concept of peer co-design that addresses a common goal: addressing a school and its community needs through student agency. RFK students identified, planned, and designed their first College and Career Day in 2023. It included local and state businesses, state representatives, and community and state colleges. This event communicated the partnership of the OTCS team and the school. Community members have since taken an interest in the student-designed work and have inquired about the [protocol and/or methods](#) used at RFK so they can use it to design student agency at other schools. The student design team is composed of 15 high school students, one Central New Mexico (CNM) Community College student, one CNM liaison, one student success coordinator, and the EGC team.

**RFK Student-designed College and Career Day**
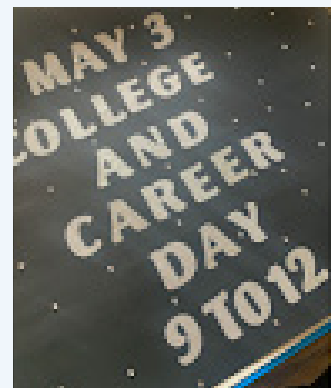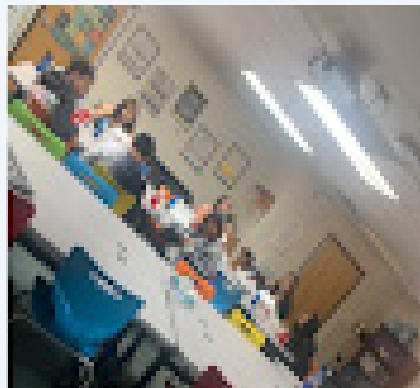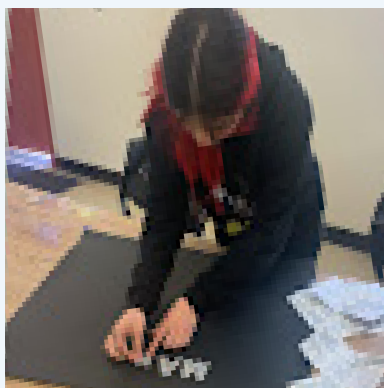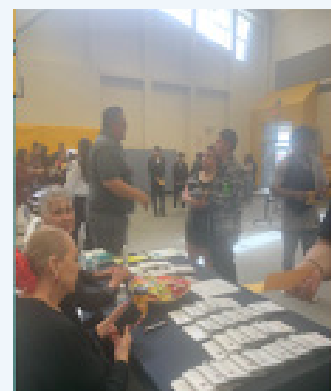
## STUDENT DESIGN TEAM FOCUS

### Profile of a Graduate

- Background of report
- Student art and profile design using the following components:
  1. Core Values
  2. Cultural Elements
  3. Key Competencies
  4. Essential Beliefs

### Building a Bridge

Students from Central New Mexico Community College will participate in the design sessions.

Added adult team members: liaison from CNM and online portfolio teacher.

### College and Career Event

Students will plan another College and Career event due to the feedback from staff, students, and the broader community.

### PURPOSE

**Creating time to brainstorm and imagine "what if?" can unlock and unleash the creative courage that will lead to innovative approached and solutions.**

### HOW?

**Teams of students working with adults from their school or a partner organization employ design methods to address a relevant local design problem related to connecting all high school students with postsecondary pathways.**

### How Might You Engage Your Team with Design Thinking?

- Adult leaders of the design team should read through the liberatory design materials when creating a student design team.

- Teach, model, and practice parts of the design thinking process, such as practicing empathy interviews or showing a YouTube video about design thinking.

- Inform the design team that this work requires ideation and continuous improvement.

- Meet with the administrative team to understand the school's culture.

- Conduct empathy interviews with educators and students to build trust prior to meeting with student design team members.

- Become familiar with your community in order to build authentic connections with staff and students.

- When starting with the student design team, co-design a set of team norms.

- Start and end your team meetings with connection circles.

- Move through the liberatory design process with the understanding that the team may experience failure and the process will take longer than expected.

### Tools and Resources

Explore **Tools: Empathy Interviews**

Learn from the **Empathy Interview Resource Guide**

Explore the **National Equity Project**

Learn more: **Introduction to Liberatory Design**

## VII. Data Collection & Use

### Introduction

According to the GRAD Partnership, to be useful, data needs to be actionable. When student success teams have ready access to three types of data, they are most able to take informed actions.

**These types of data are:**

- academic and well-being indicator data that reliably signal that students may need additional supports or different experiences for school success and educational attainment;
- data that help success teams understand the most effective level (school, grade, classroom, small group, individual) to respond to the indicator data; and
- insights from the people who know students the best, as well as fellow teachers and school staff, parents and caregivers, and the students themselves.

Collectively, data tells us the capacity of a school to consistently provide relevant, meaningful experiences that interest, satisfy, and challenge learners.

The presence of off-track indicators highlights the need to include student and community voices in the redesign of experiences, school policies, and practices. These indicators assessed together as part of a regular review, reveal the ability and the capacity of the school to consistently provide relevant, meaningful experiences that interest, satisfy, and challenge our learners.

**Key indicators include:**

- research-based, predictive indicators (such as attendance, course grades, and grade point average) of key secondary student outcomes, including: on-time earned grade promotion, high school graduation, and post-secondary readiness/attainment, which are continually available at the student and teacher levels throughout the school year, in as real time as possible, and actionable by school- and district-level personnel;
- information about student well-being, belonging, school connectedness, social-emotional development, and experiences in their classrooms; and
- insights from teachers, school staff, students, and families.

### Data Collection and Use in Action

For OTCS, we have been tracking our progress with our college and career pathways, geographical data, graduation rate data, and traditional data about attendance, behavior, and, of course, performance.

The profile of the graduate is the school's promise to the community stating what they will do, and the classwork, projects, and digital portfolios must align with the customized OTCS milestones as the road map to keeping that promise.

**THE OTCS DATA STORY**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Connection is Critical for Well-Being and Success** | OTCS members are with the school teams and students we serve by leading professional learning, attending community meetings, hosting network learning sessions, and being present in spaces with students and teachers on and off campus. |
| **Relationships and Listening are Well-Being Essentials** | Provides ability to weave in responses to real time needs for our schools and communities. Co-create spaces with students, staff, and caregivers to share feelings while accessing support and guidance from mental health professionals. |
| **Flexibility and Adaptations are Necessary** | • Customizing OTCS Milestones<br>• Weaving in "life stories" of guest speakers<br>• Building Pathways |
| **Schools and Partners are Working to Build Capacities** | It is a challenge for teacher teams to collect, organize, and analyze data for Student Success Systems and tracking milestones. |
| **Looking for New Solutions** | Leading with equity and Student Voice. Be Loud as a structure for student voice Capstone Projects. |

**COLLEGE VISIT STATS**

| RFK Students: College Visits | |
|---|---|
| **School** | **# of Students** |
| New Mexico Tech College | 5 |
| Eastern New Mexico University | 16 |
| Central New Mexico College | 22 |
| University of New Mexico | 25 |
| **Total** | **68** |

| Students Who Attended College Field Trips | |
|---|---|
| **Grade** | **# of Students** |
| 9th | 5 |
| 10th | 16 |
| 11th | 22 |
| 12th | 25 |
| **Total** | **97** |

| GHS Students: Colleges and Career Agencies Visiting the School/Student Visits | |
| --- | --- |
| **College/Agency** | **# of Students** |
| New Mexico State University: Student visits | 150 |
| New Mexico State University: Representatives consistently on GHS campus during lunch to answer student questions; interactions with all grade levels | 844 |
| Navajo Technical University: Spoke with all students | 844 |
| Military recruiters | 844 |
| New Mexico State University Grants Branch: Frequent visits to recruit students for dual credit opportunities | 844 |
| Oklahoma Welding Institute: Quarterly visits to GHS | 844 |
| Institute of American Indian Arts | Whole student body presentation |

## How Might You Engage Your Team with Collecting and Using Data?

**Select the holistic, real-time, actionable data section in the Grad Partnership's team reflection tool using the reflection and action process.**

### Team Shared Understanding (15 minutes)

- As a group, read the introduction and guiding questions for the holistic, real-time, actionable data.
- Check that for each of the guiding inquiry questions there is a shared understanding of what is being asked, data sources that could be used to address it, and key "look fors."

### Individual Reflection (20 minutes)

- Each team member reflects on the sections, identifying two or three strengths and challenges.

### Team Sharing (20 minutes)

- In rounds, each team member shares a strength and/or challenge (arranged by similar themes).

### Human Check-in (15 minutes)

- Who benefits from our strengths?
- Who does not benefit from our challenges?

### Action Planning (25 minutes)

- What do we need to know and do to improve our SSS and for our entire community to be involved?

*Prioritize:*

- 30 days:
  What can we do now? Who are going to be the champions working to get it done? How will we involve our community? How will we know when we are successful?
- 60 days:
  What do we need to build greater consensus or commitment around and/or increase our capacity to move forward? Who will organize? Who will need to be involved? How will we know when we are successful?
- 90 days:
  What will take more time and require work with multiple parties to move forward? Who will work together to create an action plan? Who will lead, and how do we make sure of wide community participation in the process? How will we know when we are successful?

### Debrief (10 minutes)

- Were we able to have courageous conversations characterized by trust, collaboration, and innovation?

## Tools and Resources

Read more: **Pathways to Adult Success: Early Warning and On-Track System Resources**

Explore **The Grad Partnership: Resources**

## CONCLUSION

Acknowledging that local customization is essential for the **OTCS Framework** to meet the needs of the students and adults in a community, this Playbook grows out of an attempt to make the learnings of the OTCS schools accessible to all schools across the nation and to understand human possibilities latent in the profound effort of design thinking teams. In sorting this out, we have the opportunity to explore post-secondary pathways, supporting conditions for students' individual agency and indispensable sense of belonging and connectedness.

The work of school design teams is inherently situated in a particular context within a defined ecosystem. The co-designing, prototyping, reflecting, iterating, and implementing are embedded in a community using meetings, face-to-face interactions, hands-on activities, and clear norms to provide the basis for engagement and collaboration. All schools follow different paths in implementing the framework as the process, partners, and specific approaches are dependent on who and what is available in each community.

Key components of this framework may be delivered by a student's high school, post-secondary school, training institution, intermediary organization, employer, or a combination of these partners. Decisions are made locally as to where these experiences occur, what funding is available to support them, and who leads them.

Some experiences may be provided by implementing, localizing, and weaving together existing school and/or community programs. An asset analysis of the industries, job market, and future investment opportunities in each community informs career pathway possibilities in that school and community, as well as academic course offerings that may be pertinent to local careers.

As you and your team, teachers, and systems begin to interact with the OTCS Framework, it is important to include the context and wisdom of your local school system. The OTCS Framework is designed to support agency, belonging, and connectedness for all students through a culture of dignity focusing on individualized support to ensure the well-being and success of the students served as they follow their own paths to career success.