

On Track to Career Success Framework: Learnings from New Mexico



Our Time Together Today

- Introduction
- The OTCS Framework
- Hear from the Schools
 - Mark Armijo Academy
 - Robert F. Kennedy HS
 - Grants Cibola County Schools
- Resources
- Upcoming Opportunities



The Challenge We Face

- Traditionally, high schools were not designed to provide all students with:
 - Structured exposure to college and career options
 - Hands-on experiences and applications
 - Guidance to make informed postsecondary decisions
- In an era when family-sustaining wages and meaningful careers typically require some form of postsecondary education or training, too many students still graduate high school without a clear plan for adult success.



THE ANNIE E. CASEY
FOUNDATION

Focus on strengthening families, building stronger communities for children, youth, and young adults to succeed.

How do we build a framework to support all youth in finishing their education and launching careers?

EVERYONE
GRADUATES CENTER

Seeks to identify the barriers that stand in the way of all students graduating from high school prepared for adult success, to develop strategic solutions to overcome the barriers, and to build local capacity to implement and sustain them.

How do we support staff, students, and communities in co-designing college and career explorations & experiences leading to informed and robust postsecondary choices?

Why New Mexico?

- **Strong Alignment to State Goals:** Increasing graduation rates, college & career readiness, & postsecondary transition
- **Commitment to Career Pathways:** Expansion of Career and Technical Education (CTE), dual credit, and work-based learning
- **Focus on Closing Opportunity Gaps:** Rural, Indigenous, and multilingual learners
- **Collaborative Culture:** Strong partnerships, tribal connections, and school-community and employer partnerships
- **Readiness for Innovation:** Using evidence-based frameworks to support continuous school improvement

What are the principles of the On Track to Career Success (OTCS) Framework?

- **Collaborative design:** Helps schools, communities, and employers work together to support student success from 9th grade through postsecondary transitions on a path toward meaningful, family-supporting work
- **Commitment to equity:** Ensures all students—especially those facing barriers—have access to the supports and opportunities needed for success
- **System of supports:** Builds structures grounded in real-time data, caring relationships, and purposeful career pathways
- **Student-centered focus:** Promotes agency, belonging, and connection as key drivers of academic and career readiness

The Main Elements of the OTCS Framework

Grade Level Milestones: Evidence-based academic, social-emotional, and college/career outcomes for students in grades 9-12. When met, these milestones indicate a student is on trajectory toward adult success.

Student Success Systems: Using the foundational indicators of agency, belonging, and connectedness as well as Early Warning Indicators such as attendance, behavior, and course performance to monitor student progress. Shifts student support from reactive to proactive.

Pathways to Careers Success: Ensuring all students have meaningful college and career experiences, exploration, work-based learning, and internship opportunities.

Student Co-Design: Students take the lead in shaping ideas and strategies to make school a place where everyone feels welcome, supported, and motivated—working with adults to adapt milestones and “portraits of a graduate” to local needs.



Implementation

- Co-design involves students, educators, and community members in designing all the elements of the OTCS system
- Schools/districts set up milestone tracking, success teams, and partnerships and adapt to their context
- Creating or expanding postsecondary & work-based learning to gain real-world experience

Collaborative Impact

Mark Armijo Academy

2022-2025 Graduation rate increased by 20 percentage points

Implemented internships and work-based learning opportunities

Robert F. Kennedy High School

2020-2025 Graduation rate increased by 16 percentage points

A record number of students applied for and are attending college

Grants Cibola County Schools

Early College High School Graduation rate remained steady

Grants High School Graduation rate remained steady

Laguna Acoma High School remained steady-exited from improvement status

Increased student leadership and agency

Student Impact

Being on this team means a lot to me because it gets me thinking about skills that will be helpful to me now, and in the future.

Being on this team means I have the opportunity to work with others to accomplish something good.

It makes me happy to join with people to talk about subjects not discussed in school, like community.

Being on this team means a lot to me. When I reflect on our meetings, (the focus was) the joining of two schools. These sessions unified us in a way I don't think anything else could.

I've learned how to listen to other people's ideas without turning them down.

Being a part of this team shows respect can be given and returned.

Highlighting Elements of the OTCS Framework



Robert F. Kennedy Charter School

Lori Hickox-Monjaras
Department Chair

&

Cindy O'Neill
Student Success Coordinator

*National Milestones:
The Profile of a Graduate, Capstone, and
Digital Portfolio Alignment*



Mark Armijo Academy

Shawn Morris
Executive Director

Melissa Santana
Innovation Coordinator

*Internships and Work-Based
Learning*







Grants Cibola County Schools:

Student Design Team from

Laguna Acoma High School

Grants High School

Early College High School

*Stakeholder Engagement:
Profile of a Graduate*

OTCS Resources

On Track to Career Success: Playbook

Key Features

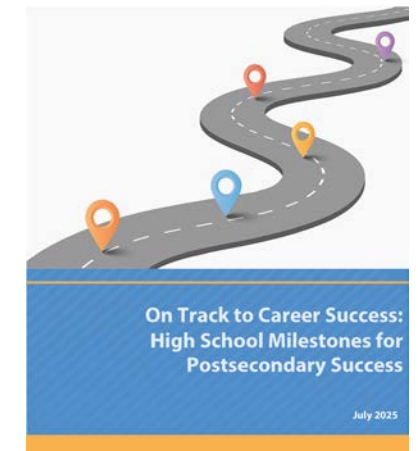
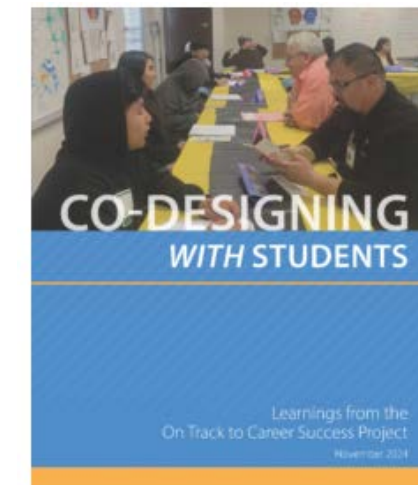
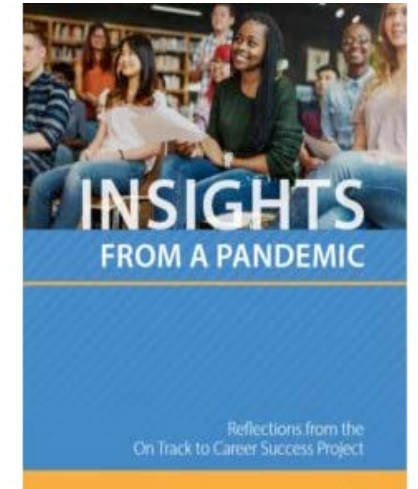
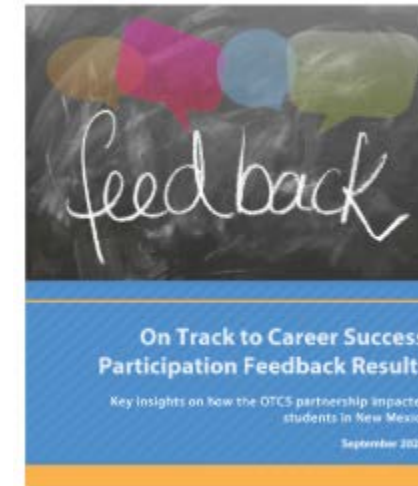
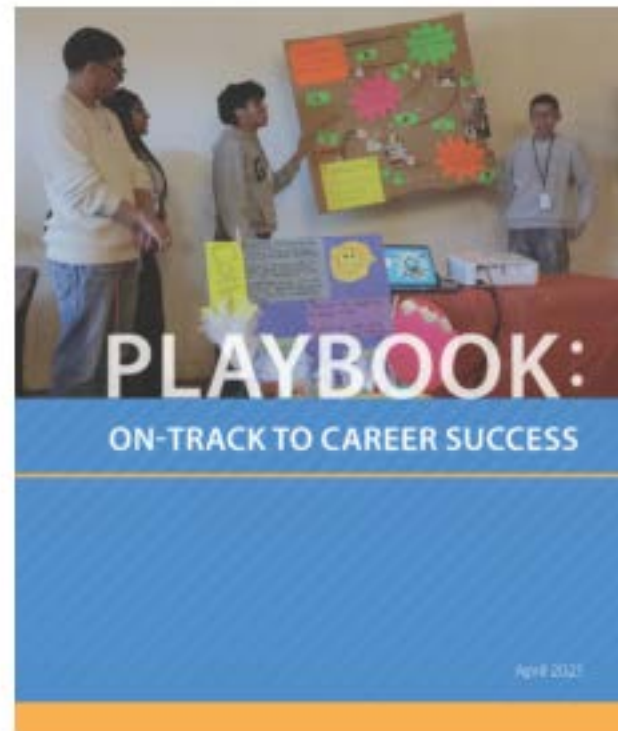
- **Equity Focus** - how to co-create with students, families, educators to reflect diverse communities
- **Practical Tools** - for student success, career readiness, and postsecondary pathways
- **Partnership Driven** - gives examples on how to align schools, community organizations, college, and workforce systems
- **Evidence-based** - translates research into actionable strategies

On Track to Career Success: Co-Designing with Students

Shows how:

- Student voice shifts adult assumptions from “***what we think is happening***” to “***what students say is true for them***”
- Students co-interpret early warning data to identify root causes—not just symptoms—turning “early warning” into “early action”
- Students help design feasible interventions - which increases relevance and ownership, co-design reveal deeper layers across student groups that adult teams often miss (e.g. transportation, belonging, scheduling)

On Track to Career Success - Resources



www.redesign.every1graduates.org/otcs/

Upcoming Opportunities:

Skills for Secondary School Success

Virtual Session

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

3:00 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. ET

Register:

zoom.us/meeting/register/k5XBP8_cSv21VnZfBmUYGA

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Contact us with questions:
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*Together, we can lift learners
with encouragement and the
wind of opportunity.
Onward, and Be Well!*