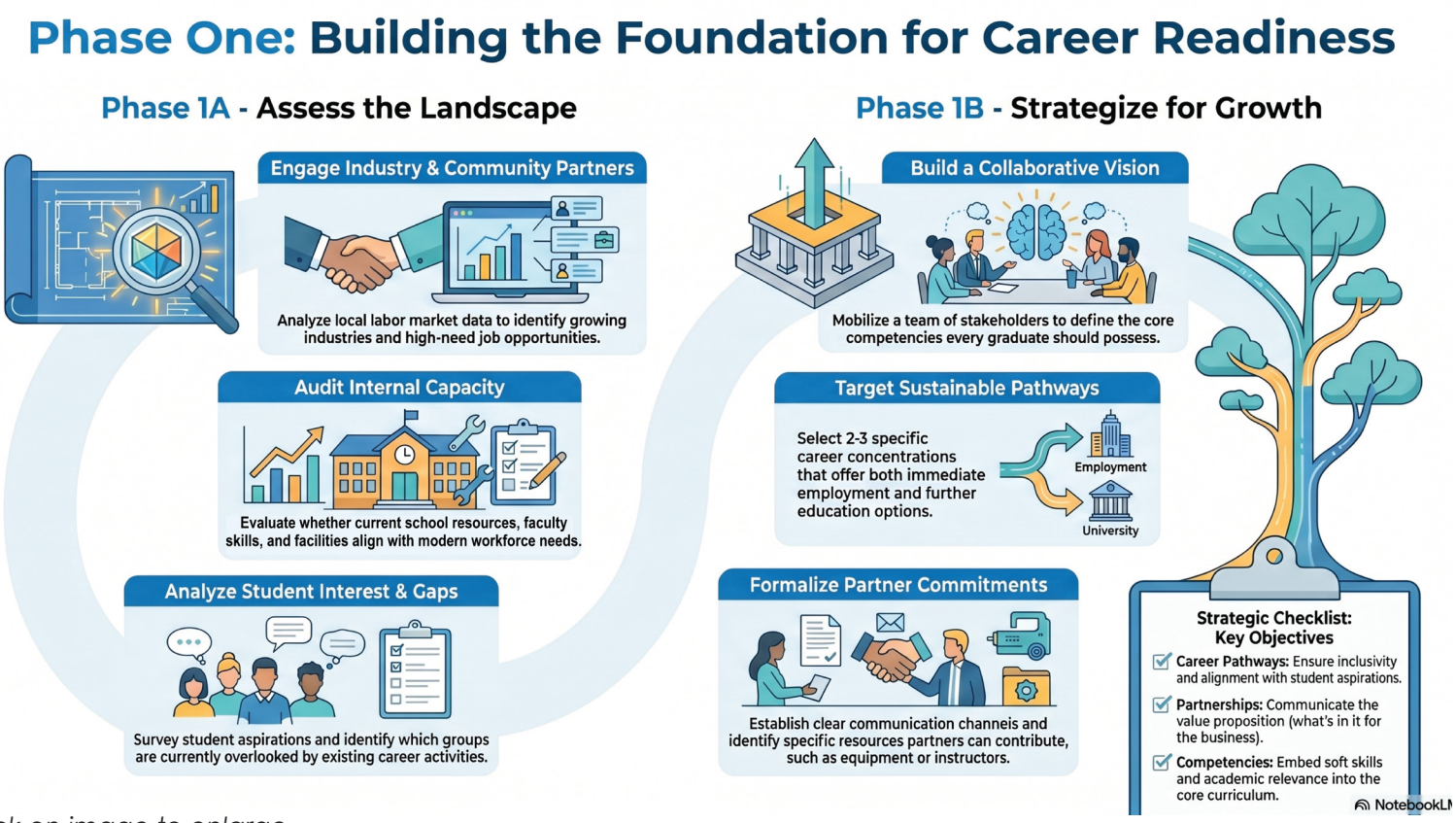


Phase One: Assess and Strategize

Phase One addresses the preliminary phases of **Vision casting, Team building, and Planning.**

This phase helps to prepare for meaningful growth in the career readiness opportunities offered by your school.



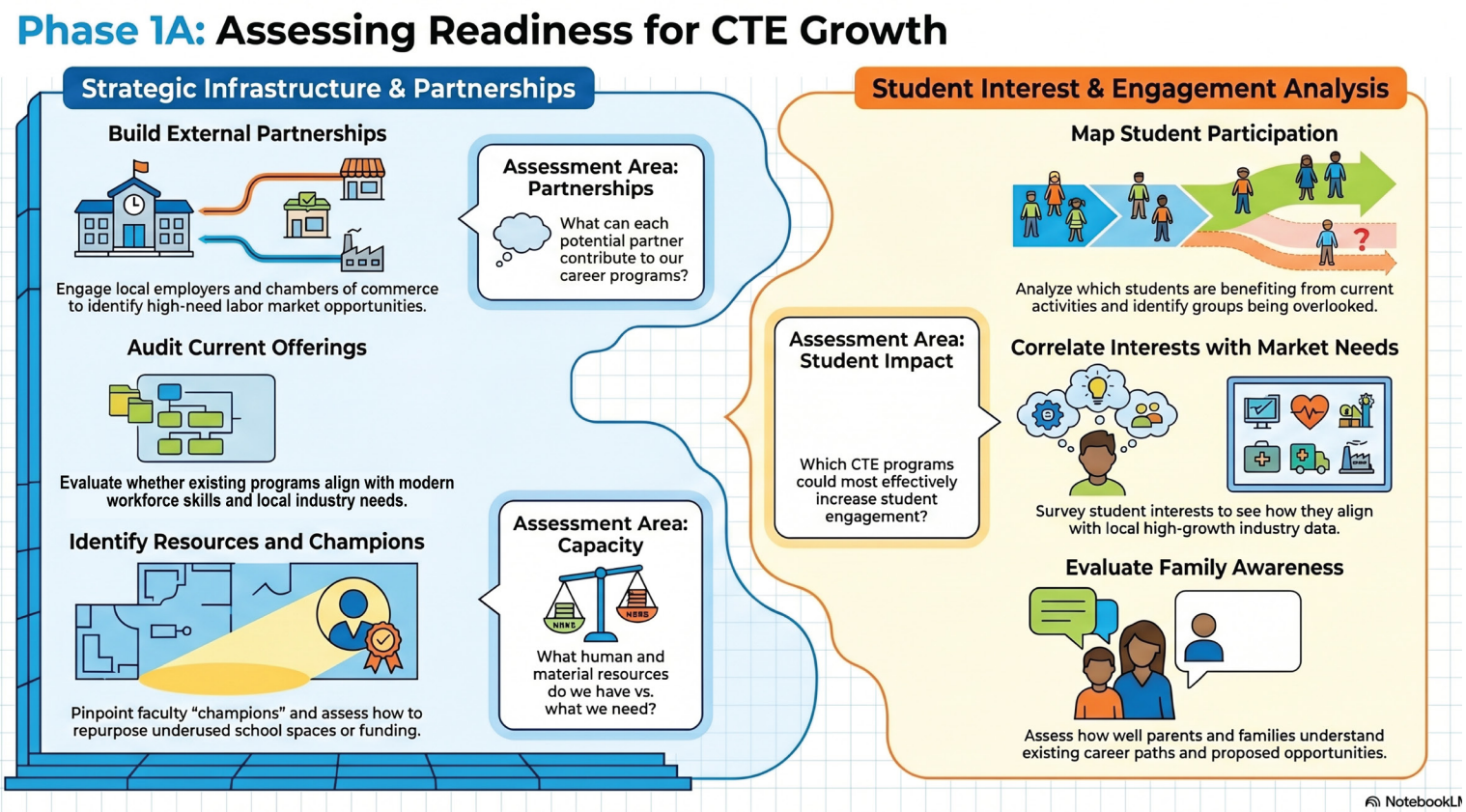
Click on image to enlarge

This seven-minute explainer video reviews Phase One's goals and objectives.



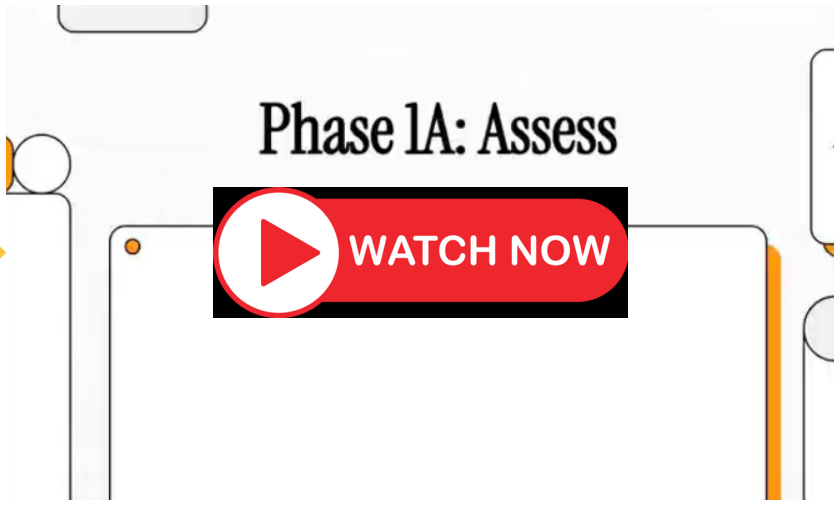
Phase 1A: Assess

Phase 1A includes areas for you as a principal to research, consider, and assess in preparation for this new phase of school development, either personally or with a few trusted associates.



Click on image to enlarge

This explainer video reviews Phase 1A's goals and objectives.



Phase 1A

The following activities highlight goals to pursue and questions to ask at each step of the process of developing a more robust, comprehensive career readiness program for your school in a format meant to be accessible and user-friendly. The resource links below offer further detailed guidance, practical examples, and case studies.

ACTIVITIES

Engage with local employers, business association, chamber of commerce, and higher ed institutions to identify willing and critical partners and learn more about local labor market needs.

PURPOSE

- Develop relationships and identify potential partners.
- Understand the skills employers are seeking.
- Ensure goals are relevant.
- Analyze local labor market data.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What relationships do we need to develop to enable career readiness for all students?
- What are growing industries/ services with high-need job opportunities?
- What are the growing industries/services with high-need job opportunities?
- What career paths will have the most impact on young peoples' lives?
- What can each potential partner contribute?
- What challenges and opportunities do we face?

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Internet Resources

- Engaging employers **(CTE)**
- Work-and-Learn in Action: Successful Strategies for Employers **(National Network of Business and Industry Associations)**

Examples

- West Virginia Alignment Between CTE Programs and the Labor Market
- Columbus, Ohio **(New Skills Ready Network)**
- Nashville, TN **(New Skills Ready Network)**
- PA Career Ready Skills Toolkit

PURPOSE

Evaluate current school-based offerings and capacities.

ACTIVITIES

- Find out how many and which students are benefiting.
- Determine whether current CTE/career-focus programs meet workforce needs.
- Assess school resources and capacity to expand current offerings or add new ones.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How can we document how many of our students are engaged in high quality career readiness activities?
- Are students developing a sense of purpose and connecting learning to their future goals?
- Do current programs align with today's skills? With local workforce needs?
- What career readiness human resources do we have (faculty, staff, community)?
- Who currently champions this work?
- Do we need to increase the number of staff/teachers involved in planning, program development, and implementation?
- What skills/programs/opportunities do we need to expand?
- What are our material resources? How can we grow resources (e.g. funding) and/or repurpose underused spaces?

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Internet Resources

Work-based Learning Manual **(FHI360)**

Evidence-Based Approaches to Designing Effective Career and Technical Education Programs **(EdResearch)**

Forging Futures: The Next Generation of Pathways **(EdStrategy)**

How To Use Data To Build Next Generation Career & Technical Education **(SchoolLinks)**

Accelerate ED **(Resources and Reports)**

Examples

ReVISION CTE workbook **(Nebraska)** annual ReFRESH CTE self-evaluation worksheet **(Nebraska)**

ACTIVITY

Assess student interest and engagement.

PURPOSES

- Map existing career activities (e.g. internships, CTE courses, work-based learning) and analyze who is participating and their level of engagement.
- Survey student career readiness interests.
- Analyze academic and employability readiness for existing and potentially new career pathways.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How many students are involved? Who is left out or overlooked?
- How do student interests correlate with local workforce needs?
- How aware are parents/ families of existing career paths and opportunities?
- What do test and attendance data indicate about readiness for existing and proposed pathways?
- What career readiness programs could increase student engagement?

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Internet Resources

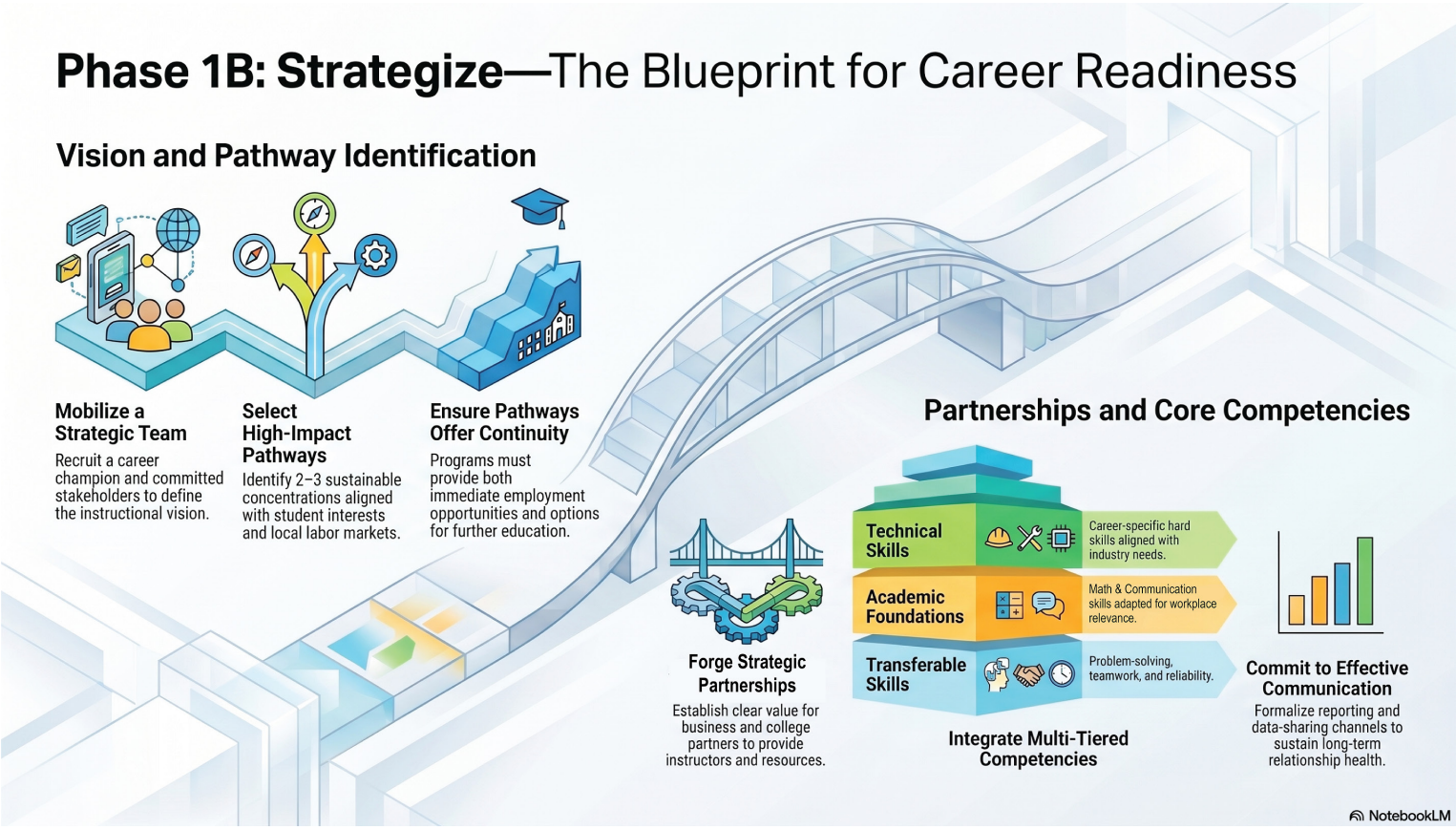
- Cluster-by-Cluster Edition: The National Career Clusters Framework Career Interest Survey **(Advance CTE)**

Examples

- CTE in Ohio: In-Demand Jobs and CTE Pathways Alignment Map and Crosswalk Project **(AIR)**
- Maryland Career and Technical Education Needs Assessment

Phase 1B: Strategize

Phase 1B offers guidance for building a team to develop, communicate, and realize a career readiness plan that is right for your students and community. While a principal provides crucial visionary leadership, most principals have too many diverse concerns to bring about an ambitious career program. Identifying, working with, and empowering a team of committed, effective change-makers—and a qualified, dynamic champion to lead them—is a crucial step in making the vision a reality.



Click on image to enlarge

This explainer video reviews Phase 1B's goals and objectives.



Phase 1B

PURPOSE

Work collaboratively to develop the vision of career readiness for all.

ACTIVITIES

- Recruit a career-focus champion to take the lead.
- Mobilize a small team of committed stakeholders.
- Define together your vision for high-quality instruction and programming to prepare students for post-secondary education and employment.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Who has the needed energy, competencies, and availability to champion this work?
- Who among school staff (and possibly community partners) play key roles and care about expanding students' career options?
- What skills and mindsets would we like graduates to display?
- What is our vision for our relationship with community partners?

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Internet Resources

- Principal Playbook for Unlocking Career Success **(All4Ed)**
- Adopting a Whole School Approach to Career Development in High School **(NCDA)**
- Designing and Implementing a CTE Program in Your District **(Edmentum)**

Examples

- A School Leader's Approach to Career Education **(Edutopia)**
- Portrait of a Graduate **(Gwinnett Co. Public Schools)**

PURPOSE

Develop a sequence of career readiness activities that can reach all/most students and offers choices as to level of participation.

ACTIVITIES

- Identify a set of career exposure, experience, and application activities that all students would benefit from and could participate in.
- Organize them broadly across middle and high school grade levels and identify which are for all students and which are for large numbers of interested students.
- Embed career readiness into core academic courses/instruction.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How can we provide all students with career exposures through a combination of activities (e.g., field trips, speakers, career fairs, videos, etc.)?
- How can we provide all students with career guidance at appropriate levels from middle grades?
- How can we provide career experiences that would collectively engage large numbers of students (e.g. work-based learning, school-based jobs, entrepreneurship and business clubs, internships, problem based learning aligned to community needs, etc.)?
- How do we provide career-based learning opportunities for students not interested in a full pathway (e.g., CTE certificates, dual enrollment courses with CTE focus, etc.)?
- How can we embed soft skills as well as academic growth into the core curriculum?
- How can core curricula be adapted to spotlight workplace relevance?
- What professional development do staff need to offer career-focused instruction?

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Internet Resources

The Modernized National Career Clusters® Framework Guidebook (Advance CTE)

Examples

Massachusetts DESE

New Skills Ready Network (Columbus, OH)

New Skills Ready Network (Indianapolis, IN)

FRNYC School Playbook (Future Ready NYC)

ACTIVITY

Structure key partnerships.

PURPOSES

- Identify key business, higher ed, and community partners needed to implement selected pathways and broader career exposures, experiences, and applications for all students.
- Establish and communicate program value to potential partners (what's in it for them).
- Identify clear objectives for new or existing partnerships.
- Establish communications channels and commitments (e.g., meetings, reports, data-sharing) with partners.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What local businesses, organizations, and two- or four-year colleges are already engaged in this sector?
- What key people could help us develop these partnerships?
- How could partnering with us help these organizations address workforce or enrollment needs?
- What resources (instructors, funding, equipment, space…) can these organizations help provide?
- How will we sustain these relationships and ensure good communications with partners?
- What different formats for exploration and instruction should we consider?

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Internet Resources

- **Four Essential Best Practices for Engaging Partners and Practitioners to Advance Economic Mobility (WestEd)**
- **6 Elements of an Effective Career Education Program (EdWeb.Net)**
- **7 Tips for Schools to Strengthen Career and Technical Education Programs (K-12 Dive)**
- **Partnerships in Practice: How to Engage With CTE Programs (JFF; resource for employers)**

PURPOSE

Identify specific, relevant career pathways or concentrations.

ACTIVITIES

- Identify two to three specific, sustainable career pathways or concentrations aligned to local labor markets and student interest
- Set objectives and outcomes for CTE programs that include career exploration and specific skill and employability development
- Identify key academic competencies (e.g., math, communications) needed for specific career pathways.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Do selected pathways offer both immediate employment opportunities and options for further education and training?
- How do these pathways correlate with students' interests and aspirations?
- What partnerships and structural adjustments are needed to implement these pathways?
- How can we ensure inclusivity that brings students from different backgrounds together in career pathways?
- Do students feel like they belong in the spaces our pathways lead them to?
- How can instruction be aligned and scaffolded so that students have skills needed for success in specialized CTE courses?
- How can business and higher ed partners help us provide instruction in career-specific technical skills?

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

Internet Resources

- **Common Employability Skills Framework (National Network of Business and Industry Associations)**
- **What is "Career-Ready"? (ACTE)**
- **AVID College and Career Readiness Framework**
- **Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce (NACE)**
- **The Modernized National Career Clusters® Framework Guidebook (Advance CTE)**
- **6 steps to a future-focused blueprint: Supporting students in making career decisions (K-12 Dive)**

Examples

- **Teaching Global Competencies through Children's Stories (Participate Learning)**
- **Massachusetts DESE**
- **New Skills Ready Network (Columbus, OH)**
- **New Skills Ready Network (Indianapolis, IN)**
- **FRNYC School Playbook (Future Ready NYC)**