

Beyond the Diploma

A Roadmap for Aligning Classrooms, Counseling, and Careers to Improve CCR Outcomes

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SUA VIA

Find your path forward

CAREER PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT

Who Is in This Room?

- ✔ **School Counselors**
- ✔ **CTE Educators and Coordinators**
- ✔ **School Administrators**
- ✔ **Business and Industry Partners**

This session was built with every one of you in mind.



About Stephanie Haynes



- Chief Career Pathway Developer and Founder, Sua Via
- 12 years as a classroom teacher: English, Career Development, Home Economics
- Curriculum developer, teacher coach, and career pathway systems builder
- Credentials: PCC, FCDDT, GCDF, CCSP, SCDA
- Working with schools across South Carolina to build systems that last

Where We Are Headed

01

Clarity About the Problem

Understand where and why siloed efforts are undermining the CCR outcomes your school is accountable for.

02

A Framework You Can Use

A structured way to identify gaps and know where to start building — something your team can work from today.

03

A Shared Language

Counselors, teachers, CTE coordinators, and administrators all talking about student success the same way.

South Carolina: Where We Stand

83.3%

On-time graduation rate

64.7%

College OR Career Ready

29.4%

College AND Career Ready

Of 59,488 graduates (2023):

- 32.6% College ready
- 61.4% Career ready, including:
 - 20.6% completed a CTE certification
 - 7.7% completed work-based learning
 - 47.8% scored silver or higher on career readiness exam
 - 0.7% of students with disabilities graduated with the HS Employability Credential
- 55% enrolled in college the following fall
- 80–90% of dual enrollment students enrolled in college immediately after graduation vs. 40–50% of non-dual enrollment students

Diplomas Without Direction

77%

of graduating students describe themselves as only moderately, slightly, or not at all prepared for what comes next.

69%

do not feel confident in their plans after graduation.

37%

of graduates now pursue a four-year degree (down from 45% in 2023).

63% choose two-year colleges, the workforce, trade schools, or a gap year.

And yet most school systems are still designed almost entirely around preparing students for college.

Source: YouScience, 2026 Post-Graduation Readiness Report: Diplomas Without Direction, pp. 3, 5.

The Alignment Gap

1 in 3

students report no more than 4 of 8 engaging classroom experiences. *Only 37% say most teachers connect content to the real world.*

400:1

national average student-to-counselor ratio. *Personalized, proactive career guidance is not a resource allocation challenge.*
It is a mathematical impossibility.

When students receive structured support in understanding their aptitudes and career connections:

**Preparedness nearly triples (13% → 33%) · Confidence more than doubles
Students drifting drops by nearly two-thirds**

The connection between classroom engagement and postsecondary readiness is not abstract. It is measurable.

Sources: Walton Family Foundation-Gallup Voices of Gen Z Study, Year 3, pp. 3, 7-8; YouScience 2026 Report, pp. 13, 17.

The Workforce Reality

72%

of all jobs by 2031 will require postsecondary education or training. 42% will require at least a bachelor's degree.

81%

of employers believe organizations should hire based on skills, not degrees. 68% want to hire from non-degree pathways.

*Yet **52% of employers** still default to degree requirements because it feels like the less risky choice.*

**Graduates need to be college AND career ready.
The workforce landscape is shifting too rapidly to prepare for only one or the other.**

Sources: Georgetown University CEW, After Everything, pp. 4-5; American Student Assistance and JFF, Degrees of Risk, pp. 3, 5-9.

Where does this leave our graduates?

GRADUATES NEED TO BE COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

*The workforce landscape is shifting so rapidly that **preparing for only one or the other will not be enough.***



Turn and Talk

What stood out to you in this data?

*Take 90 seconds to discuss
with your neighbor.*



We have this in the B.A.G.

BUILD



Designing the Architecture

ALIGN



Getting People and
Processes Moving Together

GROW



Connecting, Sustaining, and
Expanding

A mindset shift. A different way of organizing what you are already doing.



BUILD: Designing the Architecture

**Build the road before you invite
students to drive on it.**

BUILD: Designing the Architecture

- **Know your students and your options**
 - Understand readiness levels, career interests, and postsecondary options in your region: associate degrees, certifications, apprenticeships, dual enrollment, work-based learning.
- **Build a plan that connects students to those opportunities**
 - Realign the pupil progression plan, adjust scheduling, implement career pathway programming, and build intentional postsecondary partnerships.
- **Validate, then build the infrastructure**
 - Confirm alignment with state requirements, establish scheduling systems, define partnership roles and agreements.

Build the road before you invite students to drive on it.

Every Student Deserves a Plan

Element 1: Career Pathway Development Curriculum

Every student needs a structured opportunity to ask: *What will I do to make a living that matters to me?*

- This can live inside a standalone course, a CTE program, advisory periods, or embedded units across classrooms.
 - The vehicle matters less than the outcome.
 - The goal: ***every student, ideally by the end of their freshman year, has a career development plan real enough to act on.***

The Advising Ecosystem

Element 2: The Pre-IGP Advising Ecosystem

1

Career Development Course / CTE

Student explores careers, identifies strengths, produces a career development plan.

2

Pre-IGP Conversation

A teacher or dean has a guided conversation and maps a potential pathway before the IGP meeting.

3

IGP Meeting

Counselor verifies, refines, and enrolls. The student arrives prepared. The meeting is productive.

4

Follow-Up Advising

Regular audits catch students who change direction. The pathway is a living document, not a one-time decision.

Distributes the work across the whole building so no single person holds everything together alone.

Where is your school right now?

Take a look at the **BUILD** section of your reflection sheet.

There are two questions there to help you identify the people and processes needed to move you forward.



Take a few moments to answer them now.



ALIGN: Getting People and Processes Moving Together

The advising ecosystem distributes the work. Now we align every person in the building to their role in it.



The CTE/Educator's Role

Your program/class is one of the **primary ways students are introduced to career development.**

Your role is to prepare students:

- Relate your subject matter to careers
- Identify pathways your course or program fits into
- Use workforce-aligned language to align the skills you already teach in the classroom to what they will need in the workplace.

When a student is engaged in connecting what they learn in class to what they need to prepare to enter the workforce, **motivation rises and confidence in their ability to build a plan increases.**



The Counselor's Role

This framework is designed to give you time back.

The distributed pre-advising model means that **by the time a student sits in front of you, most of the exploratory work is already done.**

Your role is to collaborate with staff members to design the pre-IGP process. *A simple pre-IGP conversation guide is often all it takes to make that shift.*

Your expertise goes toward ensuring graduation requirements are met and gathering data for school programs, not toward starting from scratch with every student in your caseload.

The Administrator's Role

Your role is to create the conditions this system requires.

That means **authorizing the realignment** of the pupil progression plan and **protecting time for staff** to participate in the advising ecosystem.

It also means **authorizing GCDF training, building** advising teams, and intentionally **bridging the gap** between CCR indicators and every person on your staff.

A culture of success starts at the top, but it is the foundation that empowers staff to bring it to life



Building the Bridge to the Workforce

Schools and employers come together to build alignment:

- **For Schools:**

- Aligning programs with **technical college certifications**
- Building a **Dual Enrollment AA/AAS transfer** pathway
- Developing **apprenticeship programs, internship and job shadow** opportunities

- **For Employers:**

- Connecting with area schools to **build a talent development pipeline**
- Building **positive 2-way relationships with schools** in your area
- **Showing up** for career fairs and as career-day speakers
- **Hosting information nights** to introduce students to the benefits and requirements of working for you
- Serving as **post-high school planning advisors and mentors**

That is the bridge between education and workforce. And it is built from this same foundation.



Where is your school right now?

Take a look the **ALIGN** section of your reflection sheet.

There are two questions there to help identify the people and processes needed to move you forward.



Take a few moments to answer them now.



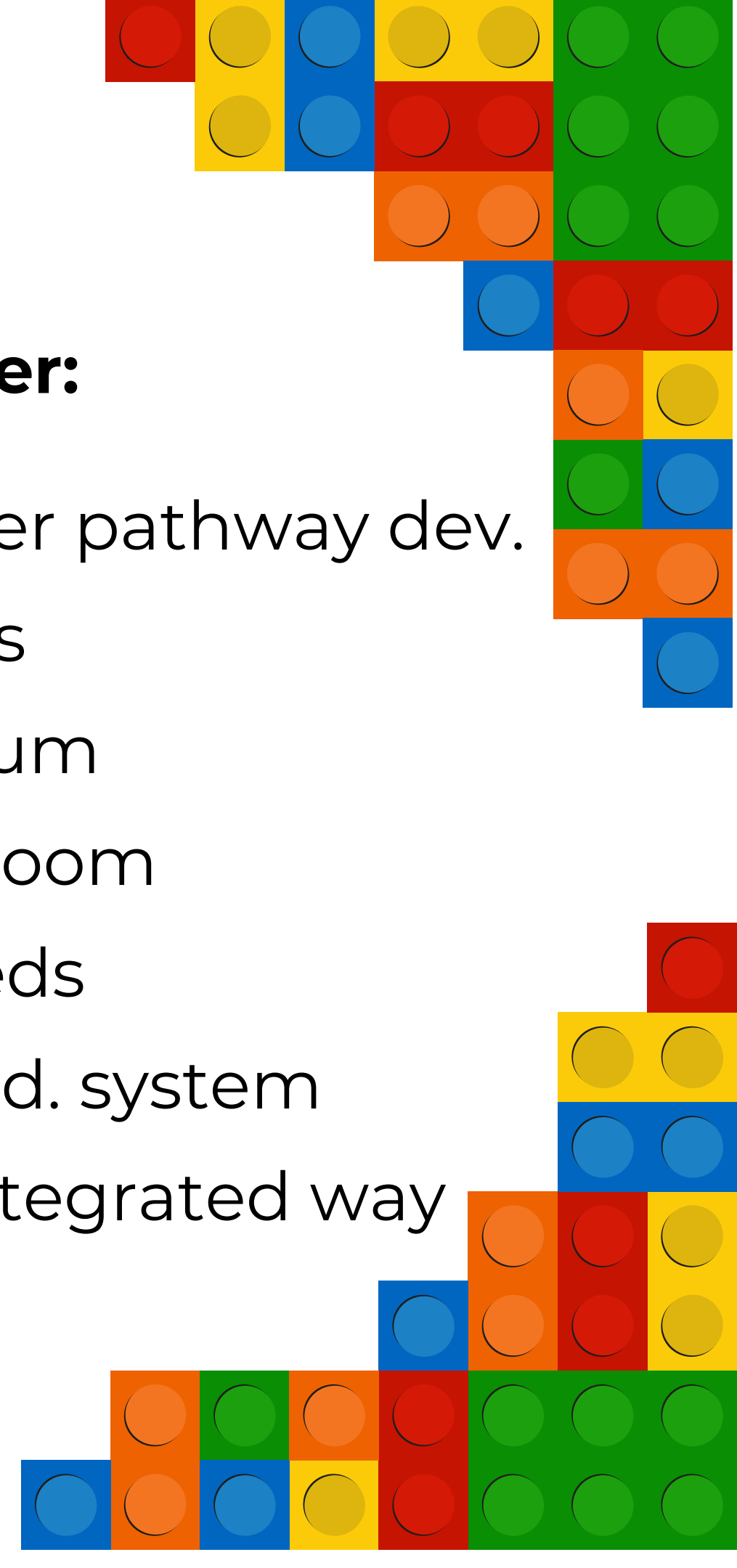
GROW: Connecting, Sustaining, and Expanding

Once you build the foundation and align your systems, it is time to grow together.

GROW: Connect

Every facet of the school ecosystem must work together:

- Connect every staff member to the vision for career pathway dev.
- Connect staff to appropriate training for their roles
- Connect teachers to career development curriculum
- Connect counselors to what happens in the classroom
- Connect administrators to regional workforce needs
- Connect parents to the opportunities within the ed. system
- Ensure all pieces connect with each other in an integrated way



GROW: Maintain and Expand

MAINTAIN

The first build will have kinks. This ecosystem evolves continuously.

- Consistent communication among all stakeholders
- Dedicated time for evaluating, planning, and improving
- Onboarding processes that sustain the system through staff turnover

EXPAND

Start with one or two pathways and get them done with excellence.

- Excellence builds trust among all stakeholders
- Trust creates the runway for expansion into additional pathways
- Student career plan data tells you what to add next

Where is your school right now?

Take a look the **GROW** section of your reflection sheet.

There are two questions there about vision and momentum. What ideas do you have to make that happen?



Take a few moments to answer them now.



BUILD * **ALIGN** * **GROW**

Case Studies



CASE STUDY: Atlantic Collegiate Academy

Atlantic Collegiate Academy

Conway, SC | Horry County | Opened 2023 | 600+ Students



BUILD

- PPP for AA/AAS
- Scheduling system
- Data tracking system
- Career level course
- Advising protocols
- Staff training
- Parent/Student comm.
- HGTC Partnership

ALIGN

- Map Graduation and AA/AAS
- HGTC approval
- District Approval
- Cascaded aligned vision

GROW

- System maintenance
- Updated processes
- Revised communication
- Updated career course
- Certificate pathways
- Apprenticeships

Atlantic Collegiate Academy



Conway, SC | Horry County | Opened 2023 | 600+ Students

Charter commitment: every student has access to up to 60 tuition-free college credits while still in high school.

100%

Graduation Rate
~218 graduates

68%

Class of 2027 on track
for an AA or AAS degree

71%

Class of 2028 on track
for an AA or AAS degree

First charter school in South Carolina history to earn an Excellent rating in its very first year.

The road was built before the first student walked through the door.



**CASE STUDY:
Oceanside Collegiate
Academy**

Oceanside Collegiate Academy



Mt. Pleasant, SC | 650 Students | Full system launching Fall 2025

A different story — and in some ways a more instructive one.

THE CONSTRAINT

- Courses must be taught by on-campus adjunct professors.
- Access to courses through the partner college is not readily communicated.
- Difficult to build a full degree pathway.

THE SOLUTION

Built a tiered model:

- Full AA or AS degree for ready students on their campus
- Workforce certifications available via TTC
- Youth apprenticeships via Apprenticeship SC.
- Many programs remain tuition-free through lottery assistance and SC WINS funds.

**The framework adapts. Same commitment. Same architecture.
Different constraints. Different solutions.**

Oceanside Collegiate Academy



Mt. Pleasant, SC | Charleston County | Opened 2016 | 600+ Students

BUILD

- Realign PPP for AA/AAS
- Update scheduling
- Data tacking system
- New career devel. course
- New advising protocols
- Staff training
- Parent/Student comm.
- TTC Partnership changes

ALIGN

- New administration/staff w/vision
- Map Graduation and AA/AAS
- District Approval
- Updated resources
- TTC advising protocols
- Cascaded aligned vision to parents/students

GROW

- System pilot Spring 26
- Updated processes
- Revised communication
- Updated career course
- School specific pathway (AirSharks)
- Certificate pathways
- Apprenticeships

The Evidence in Numbers

Both schools have earned an Excellent rating. Now look at their CCR scores.

Identifier (2025)	ACA 3rd year open	OCA 10th year open	State Average
College OR Career Ready	74.5%	97.6%	75.1%
College AND Career Ready	38.2%	87.5%	31.2%
College Ready	60%	88.7%	33%
Career Ready	52.7%	96.4%	73.3%

You do not build this system to raise your CCR score, but because your students deserve a clear path forward.

When we **BUILD**, **ALIGN**, & **GROW**

- Silos between Classrooms, Counselors, & Careers are removed
- CCR Indicators improve
- Graduates have a clear plan to connect with the workforce.

Your students deserve a clear path forward.



What is your next best step forward?

What could you do in the next 30 days to take a step forward in adaptig this model your school?

Write it down. Then share one key takeaway with your neighbor.



Find Your Path Forward

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Presentation [HERE](#)

Want to talk through what building this looks like at your school?

That conversation is one I would love to have.

Business and industry partners

The connection between what schools build and what your workforce pipeline needs is a conversation I am actively having. Let's talk.



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Find your path forward

CAREER PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT



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