



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*The world that our students will enter after they graduate is rapidly changing. To thrive in this undefined, but exciting future, students will need a strong foundation of content and technical skills, as well as the critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills necessary to become lifelong learners. With these skills in mind, Portland Public Schools developed a Graduate Portrait that defines the attributes of a college and career ready student and presents a vision for the type of system that could produce these graduates.*

This ambitious vision is our district's promise to students and families that when students graduate they will have the skills and experience they need to thrive. The College and Career Readiness (CCR) Master Plan summarized here is our district's plan for delivering on that commitment. We believe that this plan, in coordination with implementation of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC), a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), and a focus on integrated science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM), has the potential to transform our educational system. The plan is a commitment to create more personalized, relevant, and engaging learning experiences where every student has access to rigorous college-level coursework, personalized student supports, career and technical education (CTE), and project-based learning. The plan is based on a belief that a more engaging, rigorous, and relevant education will improve attendance, persistence, achievement, completion, and ultimately post-secondary success.

PPS developed the plan by (a) soliciting feedback and input from key stakeholders, including high

school principals, teachers, students, district staff, board members, and an Advisory Council; (b) conducting an in-depth assessment of the district's CTE and CCR programs; and (c) reviewing research on the effectiveness of specific college and career readiness approaches. The outcome of this process of combining community input with evidence-based practice is a proposal to create ***thematically-based college and career pathways*** in PPS high schools. Although schools' specific pathways would be designed in collaboration with their communities, each of these vertically integrated cohorts would be characterized by the following design principles.

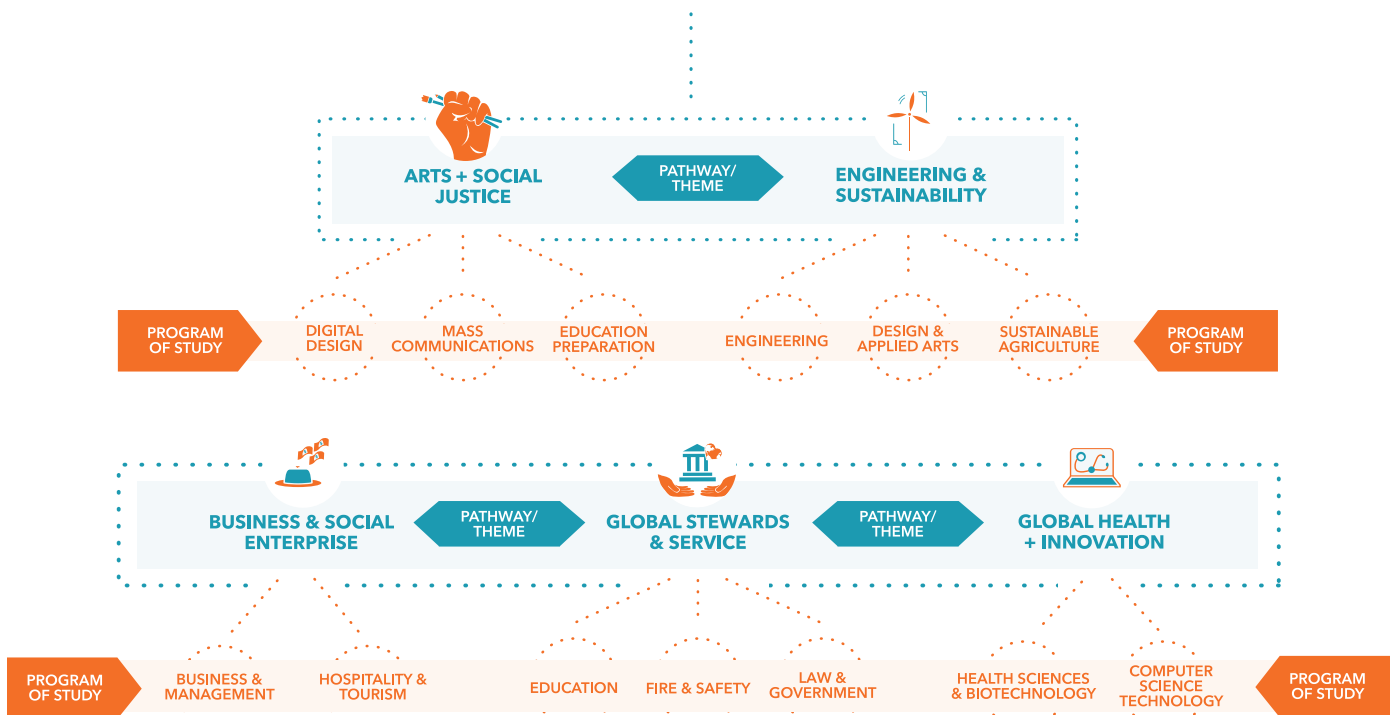
This plan builds on the significant investment PPS has made in facilities and CTE programming over the past decade. Introducing vertically integrated, thematically focused pathways provides a framework for students' individual classes and educational experiences to hang together. Whether industry, STEAM, or humanities-focused, a theme would help students make connections between disciplines, and provide opportunities to engage in authentic, inquiry-driven, interdisciplinary work.

# FICTIONAL HIGH SCHOOL OF ABOUT 1800 STUDENTS

ALL 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS



## ALL 10-12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS AND THEMES

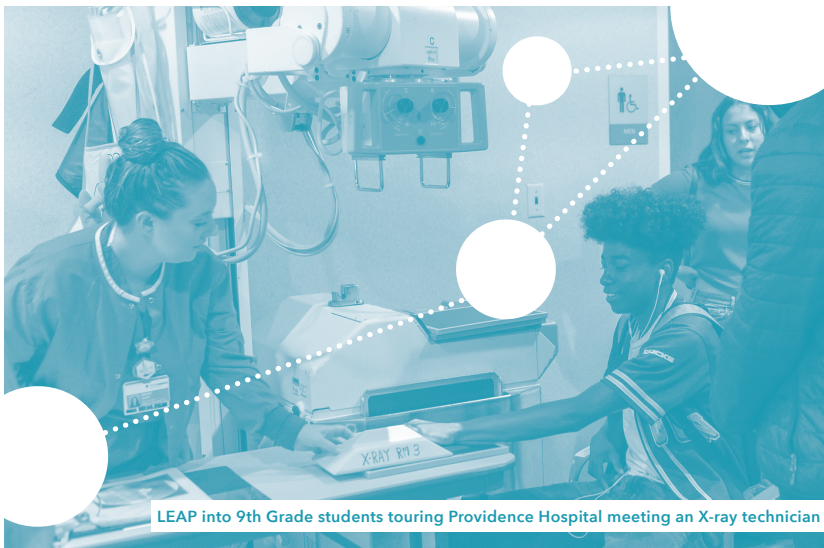


Alliance High School, Manufacturing CTE Program



Franklin High School, Video Production CTE Program





LEAP into 9th Grade students touring Providence Hospital meeting an X-ray technician

## CAREER/INDUSTRY/THEMATIC FOCUS

Each comprehensive school would provide 3-6 vertically integrated pathways, depending on school size. Ideally, each pathway would enroll at least 200-300 10th through 12th grade students, and be organized around a theme. These themes could be Humanities and/or STEAM based (e.g. Arts and Social Justice) or connected to a specific career or industry (e.g. Global Health and Innovation).

## INTEGRATED CTE AND CORE

Pathways would include high levels of integration between CTE and core academic classes. To facilitate this, teachers would have common planning time and would be encouraged to earn dual CTE and academic endorsements. CTE coursework would include state-approved programs of study that allow students to earn industry certifications and stackable credentials.

## SPECTRUM OF IMPLEMENTATION

These design principles can be implemented in ways that take into account the size, structure, and specialized nature of focus-option, alternative, and charter schools. For example, Benson would continue to be the focus-option CTE high school for students interested in programs offering more in-depth project-based and work-based learning opportunities, and specialized facilities, equipment, and staff. Jefferson, Alliance, Metropolitan Learning Center, and Community Based Organizations would still function as district-wide options for students. Implementation in the districts' alternative education system could leverage and accelerate the federally funded Personalized, Relevant, Engaged for Postsecondary (PREP) Project.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teachers would have common planning time to develop interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum that prioritizes deep inquiry over breadth. Common formative, performance, and portfolio assessments would allow teachers to monitor the effectiveness of their teaching and make adjustments based on student need.

## PROJECT-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Each pathway would offer a continuum of thematically aligned project-based learning that would allow students to apply knowledge and skills from multiple content areas to engaging questions, problems, or challenges. This continuum would also include career awareness, exploration and preparation opportunities such as workplace tours, job shadows, student-based enterprises, and internships.

## PERSONALIZED STUDENT SUPPORTS

Small pathways learning communities of 200-400 students would improve the ability of teams of teachers and counselors to monitor student progress and design, track, and adjust interventions. More broadly, pathways would provide a sense of community and improve students' sense of belonging.

- We are *not* recommending a system to track and sort students. Each pathway, regardless of theme, must provide equal access to rigorous college-level coursework, and provide equally viable avenues to college and career. Lessons from Portland's prior experience with small learning communities must be used to improve implementation.
- We are *not* suggesting that the choice of a particular pathway or theme should constrain or determine a student's college or career options. The themes would function as a form of connective tissue for students' experiences, not as a commitment to pursue a particular career path.
- We are *not* recommending a move away from rigorous disciplinary literacy. Instead, we believe that the world class education we envision for Portland Public Schools can elevate and liberate the mind, while also preparing our community's young people for their future.
- We are *not* recommending one more thing. Instead, this plan provides an opportunity to operationalize the Graduate Portrait, address the goals of the High School Strategic Plan, build on the GVC, and leverage the success of STEAM, Humanities, and CTE.
- We are *not* recommending small schools, but rather comprehensive high schools with aligned pathways and a variety of whole school programming to provide focus and choice.

# INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ROADMAP

