

ENGAGE. CONNECT.

TIPS & TRENDS FROM THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR COLLEGE & CAREER TRANSITIONS

March 20, 2020

Greetings!

The education system often gets labeled as cautious and slow-moving. But from what I've seen happen over the past few weeks, critics have been proven wrong, and educators and administrators are owed a pretty big apology.

As we face a threat that is unprecedented in our lifetimes, education leaders have taken bold, decisive, and lightning-fast action to keep students, their families, and their communities safe. **Schools across the country have been closed** for weeks, and in some cases months, to reduce the potential spread of this highly contagious disease. Educators have turned on a dime to move from classroom to online instruction (much to the chagrin of my 8th grader, who initially thought he was going on a sudden spring break). And people across the education spectrum have focused on ways to ease the impact on families, particularly for those students who relied on school for breakfast and lunch: In addition to setting up food pickup sites, some schools have even enlisted their **bus drivers** to help with home delivery!

I don't have any words of wisdom, insights, or predictions as to how all this is going to play out. But what I do have is a deep appreciation and respect for everyone in the education system who is doing whatever it takes to educate, care for, and support our children and communities. Thank you - and please keep doing the vitally important work you're doing. It matters.

Best,

Brett

The CCL In.Sight Blog

Have you read the latest posts from **The CCL In.Sight Blog**? Hans and Brett share thoughts and information on Career Connected Learning. Read a recent blog post:

Reflection on COVID-19: The Risk of Pulling Apart While We Keep Our Distance

Let's be honest. Dealing with the COVID-19 maelstrom - both the knowns and unknowns - over the last few weeks has been emotionally rattling and unnerving. Although I tend to be an optimistic person - even a risk taker - I have found myself feeling quite nervous about travel in confined spaces, about large crowds, and been somewhat fearful for my personal safety and that of my loved ones.

On a personal level, I'm realizing that I do need to be appropriately cautious, make realistic decisions about travel and projects, yet also to be loving and kind and generous with others. Usually I express my kindness and care for others through physical touch, such as a warm handshake or a friendly hug. Now I have to be cautious about physical touch and therefore, find other ways to express warmth and appreciation. This means a kinder word, a warmer smile, and taking more time to listen.



In addition to learning how to keep emotionally close while maintaining safe physical separation, we will also need to get better at communicating and conducting work through new technologies. This week, I had one upcoming workshop canceled and another workshop that I will be conducting has been converted to a virtual format.

[Read the full post here.](#)

And remember, if you want to receive these blog posts as they're published, just **[subscribe to the blog](#)** and we'll do the rest!

Announcing the Release of CareerSmart Classrooms!

Later this month, NC3T will officially release **CareerSmart Classrooms**, a new set of resources to help educators across the school incorporate career content and workplace skills into the classroom!

With CareerSmart Classrooms, your staff can access an exciting set of new resources designed to help all teachers embrace career readiness while still effectively delivering their core content.

New Career Readiness requirements are asking classroom teachers to integrate career readiness into their classrooms. However, many who teach the "core academic subjects," along with teachers of academic electives like the arts and social sciences, might not have any practical steps they can take.

The CareerSmart Classrooms system from the National Center for College and Career Transitions (NC3T), offers a solution to this challenge. The CareerSmart Classrooms system provides a comprehensive set of resources, including career information sheets, lesson plans and activity plans; subscriptions will be available for individual educators, schools, and multi-school systems.

Stay tuned for our official rollout!



FYI - Information You Can Use

[Report identifies strategies for scaling work-based learning](#)

A new report from the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) aims to narrow the gap between what employers need and the type of skills employees entering the workforce possess, identifying core elements of system changes governors can use to embed work-based learning in K-12. The lessons were collected as NGA worked with 19 states and territories for four years to build opportunities for youth to access work-based learning experiences. The report recommends specific action items such as aligning work-based learning goals with governors' education and workforce priorities. The elements include how to create and communicate a vision, methods to measure the data, and ways to cultivate resources and policy changes. Despite a low unemployment rate, many new workers are unable to secure stable employment due to lack of skills.

Full article: <https://www.nga.org/>



[Why Coronavirus Looks Like a 'Black Swan' Moment for Higher Ed](#)

Colleges by the dozen are canceling in-person classes and scrambling to create remote-teaching alternatives. Is it crazy to think that a new virus could be more of a catalyst for online education and other ed-tech tools than decades of punditry and self-serving corporate exhortations? Not in the least. What Hurricane Katrina was to colleges in New Orleans, the reverberations from coronavirus will be to all of American higher education: a reset moment that prompts colleges to rethink how they operate at every level. Sweeping predictions are dicey, especially considering that higher ed hasn't even begun to feel the full impact of the coronavirus crisis, or the financial havoc that will follow in its wake. But consider what's happened already: campuses shutting down and bringing thousands of study-abroad students back home, education associations calling off major conferences, colleges replacing visits for admitted new students with virtual programming, and alumni leaders talking about ways to remake large-scale reunion gatherings and commencement ceremonies. It seems safe to say that this will be not only enormously disruptive but also paradigm changing. The "black swan," that unforeseen event that changes everything, is upon us.

Full article: <https://www.chronicle.com/>



[Tracking and the Future of Career and Technical Education: How Efforts to Connect School and Work Can Avoid the Past Mistakes of Vocational Education](#)

Despite the popularity of Career and Technical Education (CTE), concerns remain about the availability of resources for different CTE pathways, their relative status, and the degree to which adults working within schools are problematically sorting students explicitly or implicitly into different course-taking pathways. This brief examines the tension that has often arisen between the desire to link learning to post-high-school work and the desire to avoid low academic expectations for students perceived as unlikely to attend college. The authors explore the question of how schools might meaningfully support career exploration and preparation, while avoiding the tendency of prior vocational education to disproportionately sort students into distinct tracks by ethnic, racial, and/or socioeconomic characteristics. They conclude with recommendations for enacting CTE in ways that support the equitable distribution of educational opportunity.



Full article: <https://nepc.colorado.edu/>

Everything You Need to Build Pathways Programs of Study

If you're interested in developing individual Pathway Programs or integrated Pathways Systems across your school, district, or region, the Pathways System Design Suite is an indispensable resource for you. And our



Pathways System Design Suite

upcoming webinars will explain exactly how you can use this new resource!

Written by Hans Meeder, President of NC3T, this suite of resources includes:

- **The Pathways System Decision Guide** - This is a step-by-step guide to help your leadership team make the key decisions that lead to a world-class Career Pathways System. The Pathways System Decision Guide gives you the confidence that you and your team address all of the important design decisions that need to be made in creating a career pathways system, scaled to fit your needs.
- **The Pathway Program Design Guide** - This is a simple-to-follow guide for designing a Pathways Program or upgrading an existing CTE program into a Pathway Program. The Design Guide is built around 10 elements of high-quality careers and each element is directly linked to guidance from the Perkins Act.
- **The Pathways System Resource Kit** - The Pathways System Resource Kit is a collection of forms, templates, talking points, and fact sheets that your leadership team can draw upon as you work through the Decision Guide to design, develop, and promote your pathways initiative.

[Learn more about these new resources](#) and sign up for an upcoming webinar!

About the National Center for College and Career Transitions (NC3T)

K-12 education and the adult workforce are inextricably linked; and, as even the most casual observer understands, we currently face real challenges on both fronts. **NC3T** was created to help educators, policymakers and community leaders design integrated college and career pathway systems that provide students with purpose and direction, and provide them the knowledge and skills they'll need to secure their futures and the futures of the communities in which they live.

If you're interested in connecting students to the workforce in some way, including through out-of-school initiatives, targeted in-school channels (CTE, academy models), or developing a comprehensive community-wide or regional strategy that all partners can get behind, please contact Hans Meeder (Hans@NC3T.com) or Brett Pawlowski (Brett@NC3T.com) to talk further.

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