

What is an Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP)?

The term ICAP refers to both a **process** that helps students engage in academic and career development activities and a **product** that is created and maintained for students’ academic, career and personal advancement.

ICAP is a student-driven, ongoing process that actively engages students, enabling them to:

- Understand their own interests, strengths, values and learning styles
- Create a vision of their future
- Develop individual goals
- Prepare a personal plan for achieving their vision and goals

As illustrated in the table below, the difference between the two columns is that with ICAP, the product (the plan) is intended to be dynamic and flexible, reflecting the following:

- Students’ coursework, learning and assessment results
- Students’ postsecondary plans, aligned with their career, academic and personal/social goals and financial reality
- Students’ records of college- and career-readiness activities

4-Year Plan (Traditional)	ICAP (The Vision)
Product-based	Process-based
Some or select students (CTE, Special Education)	All students
Acts as a 4-year plan of courses	Acts as a navigational tool for students in grades 6-12 and beyond
Career application in elective CTE classes	Career application in all classes
Career development in elective courses or not at all	Career development infused throughout all courses
Student “on own” for his/her development	Student-driven with collaboration (advisor, mentor, parents)
High school graduation = end point	High school graduation = checkpoint
Career development is only the school counselor’s job	Career development is systematic, whole-school responsibility

The ICAP process and related products can provide clear benefits to both students and schools if the district supports ICAP efforts in a strategic and coordinated manner. Districts must make a shift in thinking, approaching and delivering career development in their schools in order to help students and their families become more informed consumers of the education and training required to meet their personal goals.

This shift is a strategic one, toward a **holistic** and **student-centered** approach away from the ‘random acts of career development’ that occur now. Strong infrastructure, relationships and student awareness are key to successful implementation of ICAP.

Self-Awareness (AWARENESS)

- Periodic self-assessment of interests and strengths
- Reflection and goal-setting
- Financial knowledge and understanding of resources
- Academic courses and skill preparation
- Behavioral and employability skill preparation

Career Exploration (EXPLORATION)

- Middle school career exploration activities and opportunities
- High school career exploration activities and opportunities
- World of work and labor market trends
- Understanding and comparing different postsecondary education and training

Career Planning (PREPARATION)

- Planning skills
- Middle school plan
- High school plan

Career Management (ACTION)

- Implementing the plan
- Updating the plan with new information and artifacts
- Conferencing, advising, and mentoring with students
- Transitioning ICAP components