

OKLAHOMA

2018 SNAPSHOT

Oklahoma is one of the 10 states selected to participate in New Skills for Youth (NSFY), an initiative enhancing state efforts to increase the number of learners across the country who are prepared for success in both college and career. NSFY is a \$75 million national initiative developed by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers, Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group.

In the first two years of the initiative, the Oklahoma NSFY team worked through a regional model to align career pathways with high-demand industries.¹ The state also launched the Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) program, with the aim of providing students better guidance to improve their participation and outcomes in career readiness initiatives.²

In 2018, priority strategies for the Oklahoma NSFY team were:

- **Implementing and scaling ICAP:** Following a 2017-18 school year pilot, the Oklahoma NSFY team rolled out a newly developed ICAP protocol to 134 sites in 74 districts.
- **Developing the Oklahoma Edge website and learning community online platform:** Oklahoma launched a new website providing a one-stop shop for resources and information about career pathways opportunities, including an online platform that promotes engagement among students, teachers and local business leaders.
- **Establishing goals to expand internships and apprenticeships:** Supported by new legislation, Oklahoma implemented a statewide system to deliver work-based learning, with the goal of engaging 20,000 learners in internships and apprenticeships by December 2020.

The Oklahoma Context

Around 55 percent of jobs in Oklahoma are middle-skill jobs, meaning they require some postsecondary training but not a four-year degree. However, only around 47 percent of the workforce has the level of training necessary to fill these jobs.³ The Oklahoma NSFY team's vision for change is therefore to expand access to Career Technical Education (CTE) and other high-quality career pathways that can adequately prepare learners to meet the needs of the labor market.

Career readiness programs in recent years have largely fallen under the umbrella of Oklahoma Works, a workforce development initiative launched in 2014 under former Gov. Mary Fallin.⁴ Oklahoma Works operates on a regional basis and is organized into seven Key Economic Networks (KENs) that connect employers in high-demand industries with educational institutions, workforce development

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boards and other local organizations.⁵ Each KEN has individual targets for key indicators, including the attainment of postsecondary credentials of value.

The Oklahoma NSFY team has focused on facilitating connections between education and industry and aligning career pathways with industry needs. An early win for the initiative was expanding externship opportunities for teachers. Oklahoma successfully scaled the Oklahoma Educators and Industry Partnership — which connects science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teachers with summer externship opportunities — from one to three regions.⁶ The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) also launched a new paid externship program in 2017 that provides additional intensive learning opportunities for STEM teachers.⁷

Separately, OSDE adopted a measure of Postsecondary Opportunities in its high school accountability system, ensuring that schools would get credit for learners who participate in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual credit, work-based learning, and courses leading to industry certification. The new accountability system is one of the key levers in the Oklahoma NSFY team's strategy for transforming career pathways for youth.

Implementing and Scaling ICAP

During the 2018-19 school year, Oklahoma focused on expanding career and academic planning through implementation of the ICAP program. ICAP was enacted in 2016 when the state Legislature passed H.B. 2155, a law requiring all learners to develop an individualized learning plan beginning in the sixth grade.⁸ Implementation began in the 2017-18 school year at 59 sites in 28 districts and was scaled to a total of 134 sites in 74 districts by the end of 2018.

Oklahoma plans to fully implement ICAP by the 2019-20 school year, reaching a total of 752 high schools and middle schools in 515 districts.

Using resources developed by OSDE, pilot sites each developed an ICAP core team to develop a school-based career guidance curriculum. These curricula take a holistic approach to the ICAP process, assigning specific roles not only to students and faculty but also to parents and community members.⁹

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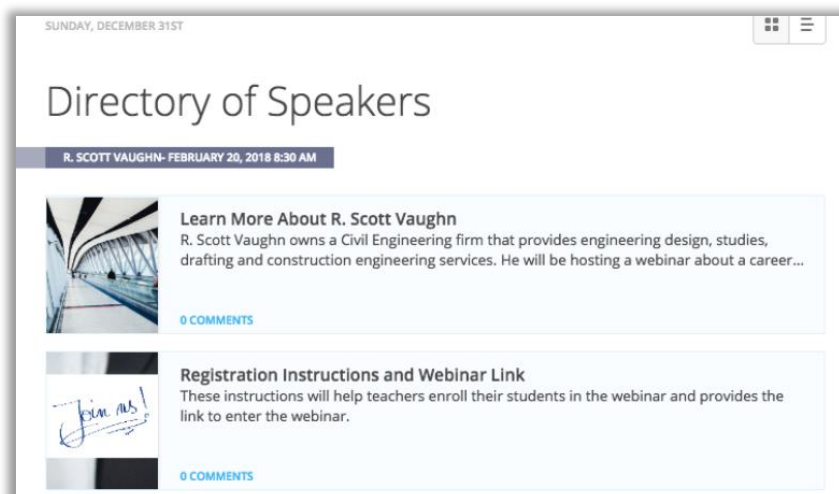
OSDE partnered with the University of Oklahoma to conduct a pilot study of ICAP's first year, identifying successes and challenges through focus groups, interviews and surveys. The pilot study found that early implementation of ICAP beginning as early as the sixth grade is ideal and that mechanisms to support inter-district communication are necessary so that schools and districts can share strategies and lessons learned.

Another lesson from the pilot is that ensuring academic and career readiness must be a team effort. In the past, many schools have depended on school counselors to guide students through the process. Under the ICAP framework, school counseling is a school-wide responsibility that must be shared by teachers and other administrators, as well as by parents and members of the community, who may be able to provide mentorship, work-based learning experiences and other guidance. This shared responsibility is particularly important in rural communities, which often have limited human and financial resources. To ensure equitable access to counseling resources throughout the state, OSDE is using NSFY funds to support ICAP implementation by paying counselors to design implementation toolkits and providing professional development opportunities for counselors.

Developing the Oklahoma Edge Website and Learning Community Online Platform

To support this holistic approach to career planning, Oklahoma also worked to develop an information- and resource-sharing platform for students, parents, educators and businesses alike.¹⁰

The Oklahoma Edge platform was previewed at the Student Success Summit in January 2019 and features ICAP resources and graphic guides detailing pathways to high-demand careers, including information on career and college fairs and model plans for professional development created by school counselors. With different interfaces for different kinds of users (students, parents, educators and businesses), the website serves as a “one-stop shop” for meaningful work-based learning experiences.¹¹



“Careers in the Classroom” offerings in the Oklahoma EDGE platform

The platform also facilitates connections with local industry leaders. The “Careers in the Classroom” feature, for example, is a video platform that allows up to 100 classrooms to watch presentations by — and engage with — local employers, who have been selected by OSDE and the Office of Workforce Development.

The Oklahoma team used feedback from a variety of stakeholders — including representatives from the ICAP pilot districts, the Department of Higher Education, and the Office of Workforce Development — to ensure that the Oklahoma Edge website provides high-quality content for all potential visitors.

Establishing Goals to Expand Internships and Apprenticeships

In 2018 Oklahoma passed S.B. 1171, which creates a work-based learning program under the Office of Workforce Development, in partnership with the Department of Career and Technology Education and other entities.¹² The legislation will help Oklahoma deliver on Gov. Mary Fallin’s statewide work-based learning goal called Earn & Learn Oklahoma, which aims to provide 20,000 internships and

apprenticeships by December 2020 — up from 17,000 in 2017.¹³ The goal is shared across the Office of Workforce Development, OSDE, the State Regents for Higher Education, and the Department of Career and Technology Education.

The bill sets in place a framework to achieve this goal by improving coordination of work-based learning opportunities through the state labor market and labor exchange systems, as well as promoting high-quality work-based learning opportunities at the school level through ICAP and other

Local Highlight: Expanding Internship Opportunities at Duncan High School Through Pathways to Future Careers

Juniors and seniors at Duncan High School in the South Central region of Oklahoma are now able to gain experience in the career field of their choice with the Pathways to Future Careers program. To participate in this internship program, students complete career aptitude assessments and soft skills trainings before writing a cover letter and interviewing with a local company. Once hired, students spend two class periods of each school day working at the company.

initiatives. The state accountability system, which values work-based learning participation in the high school accountability score, further reinforces this goal.

OSDE is working with the Office of Workforce Development's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regional coordinators to identify potential internship and apprenticeship opportunities in their respective KENs. This effort requires significant communication and coordination with both schools and local employers to ensure that quality opportunities are available in high-demand industries.

Looking Ahead

In the final year of NSFY, Oklahoma will continue to scale career and academic advising through ICAP and the new Oklahoma Edge website. The NSFY team will also focus on sustainability, with the aim of securing funding to continue meeting the state's ICAP and work-based learning targets once the NSFY initiative ends in December 2019.

In November 2018, Republican Kevin Stitt was elected governor of Oklahoma, succeeding Mary Fallin, who was term limited. During his campaign, Gov. Stitt expressed a commitment to promoting CTE initiatives, including the expansion of ICAP, and the NSFY team anticipates continued support from the Stitt administration as well as the Legislature.

Acknowledgments

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