

Gap/Asset Analysis of
**HEALTHCARE CAREER
PATHWAY PROGRAMS**
and Related Services
in Northeast Indiana

May 2023

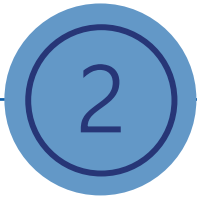


SUMMARY



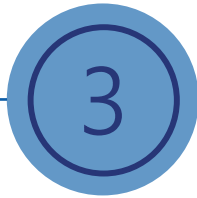
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SUMMARY

Description

This report summarizes the findings of a comprehensive research effort to assess the strength of the K-12 healthcare career development ecosystem in northeast Indiana. The study examined healthcare career exploration, education, training, and work-based learning (WBL) opportunities available to students in grades 7 through 12.

Particular attention was paid to the level of connection between employers, community service providers, and students. The research team utilized data from various sources including: the state Career and Technical Education (CTE) reporting system (INTERS), surveys distributed to key stakeholder groups, and interviews and focus group conversations.

Outcomes

Based on a careful analysis of the data and information collected from this research, this report:



Significant progress was made in collecting information about existing healthcare career programming and gaining a better understanding of the challenges facing participants and providers. In total 474 participants provided information and feedback for this report across the 4-month study period. The largest group represented were students (313) followed by school counselors (53), and teachers (27).

ROLE	PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
Students	313	66.03%
School Counselors	53	11.18%
Teachers	27	5.70%
Community Service Providers	24	5.06%
K-12 Administrators	21	4.43%
Employers	16	3.38%
Postsecondary	12	2.53%
Parents	6	1.27%
WBL Coordinators	2	0.42%

ANALYSIS PROCESS

The following table outlines the key steps in the process of completing the gap and asset analysis. The steps scaffolded from one phase of the project to the next. Data collected in early phases was utilized to narrow the research focus area to support the identification of more specific root causes and possible gaps to address.

1	Existing Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A careful review of the work completed by the Healthcare Consortium. ● Review of the key findings from interviews and conversations facilitated by Region 8 Education Service Center Staff in the Fall of 2022.
2	Survey Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surveys were developed in collaboration with Region 8 Education Service Center staff. ● The surveys were designed specifically for each stakeholder group: school counselors, teachers, students, middle school program administrators, healthcare employers, community service providers, and postsecondary providers.
3	Survey Distribution and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surveys were distributed to each stakeholder group using contact lists provided by Region 8 Education Service Center staff and existing contact lists from the research team. ● Once each survey was closed, responses were analyzed to identify trends and key areas of focus.
4	Focus Groups Question Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus groups were derived from survey respondents and from the Northeast Indiana Healthcare Consortium membership list. ● Questions were developed based on survey analysis and conversations between research team members and Region 8 Education Service Center staff.
5	Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus groups were facilitated by research team members. ● Participant responses were recorded and analyzed to help clarify strategies working well and to obtain further detail regarding persistent gaps in the regional healthcare career development ecosystem.
6	Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data and information from multiple sources was organized and reviewed by the research team to identify strong connection points between survey and focus group responses and response alignment to the quantitative data available such as CTE enrollment and assessment numbers.
7	Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A final executive report was written to clearly communicate the assets, gaps, and recommended actions steps. ● The report and aligned resources will be utilized by Region 8 Education Service Center staff/leadership and the Northeast Indiana Healthcare Consortium to develop a prioritized set of actionable strategies.

ASSETS

Database

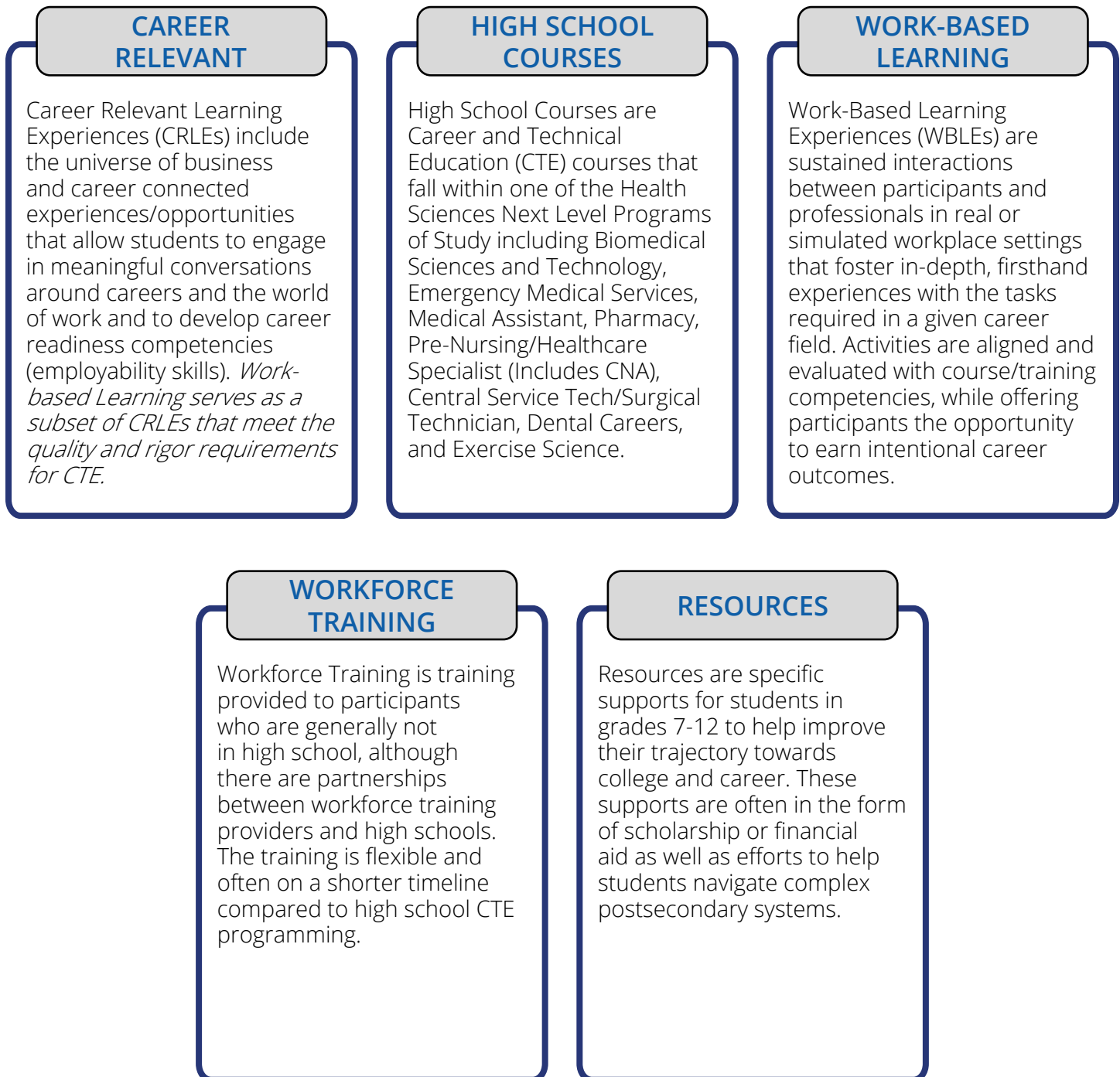
This research identified 169 programmatic assets supporting the healthcare career development ecosystem for students in grades 7-12. The database provides many details about each program including which phase(s) of the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) Continuum of Career Development the program aligns with. The three distinct IDOE-identified phases of career development for students in grades pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 are summarized in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Indiana Department of Education Explore, Engage, and Experience Continuum of Career Development.

Explore
Build awareness of careers and explore postsecondary and career options for the purpose of motivating students and to inform their decision making in high school.
Engage
Apply learning through practical experiences that develop knowledge and skills necessary for success in careers and postsecondary transition.
Experience
Train for employment and/or postsecondary education in a specific range of occupations. Internships and apprenticeships are the most common examples of this level.

The database organizes assets into five distinct categories: Career Relevant Learning, High School Courses, Work Based Learning, Workforce Training, and Resources (see figure 2).

Figure 2. Asset Categories



HIGH SCHOOL CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) COURSES

A large portion of the database contains high school health science CTE courses offered to students in northeast Indiana. In grades 9-12 there were 5,719 student enrollments in healthcare related CTE courses during the 2022-2023 school year.

Figure 3 shows the breakdown among the eight (8) CTE Next Level Programs of Study (Biomedical, Central Service Technician/Surgical Technician, Dental, Emergency Medical Services, Exercise Science, Medical Assisting, Pharmacy Tech, and Pre-Nursing/C.N.A.). An additional category labeled “Foundational” was included to capture students enrolled in courses such as Anatomy and Physiology or introductory level healthcare courses. Foundational courses are often the prerequisites to a full-fledged health science program selection. “Capstone” represents the Healthcare Specialist Capstone course which is included in multiple health science programs. Figure 4 shows the health sciences CTE student enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year by county. Figure 5 shows the locations where at least one high school CTE health science course was offered during the 2022-2023 school year.

- The program with the largest number of enrollments is Biomedical Sciences (2,266) followed by Pre-Nursing (381).
- The county with the largest number of enrollments is Allen County (2,075).
- The county with the largest number of locations offering at least one health science course is Allen (13) followed by Grant (5) and Wabash (5).



Figure 3. Career and Technical Education (CTE) High School Health Science Programs and CTE Student Enrollments in the 2022-2023 school year.

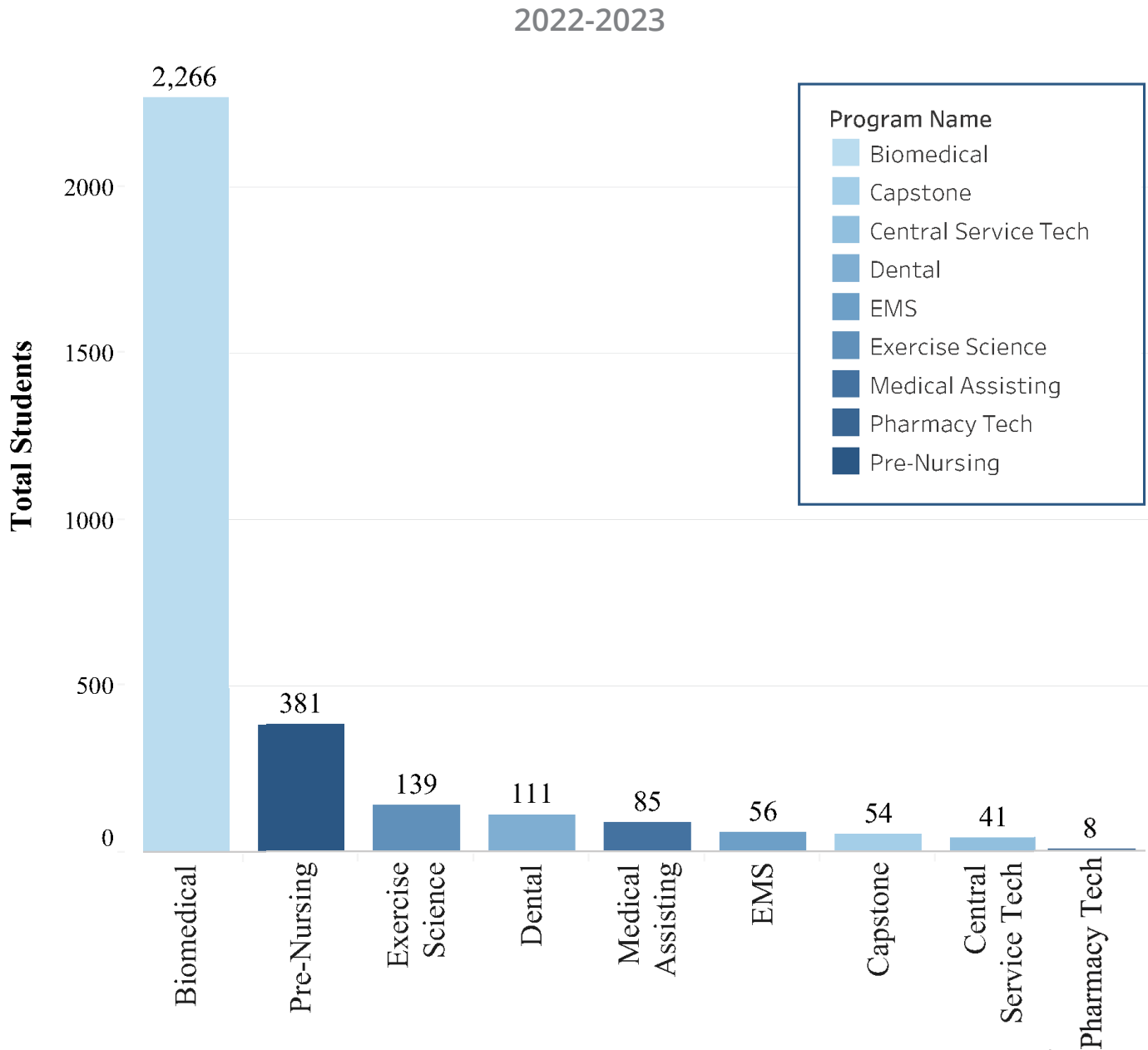


Figure 4. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Health Science High School Student Enrollments by County in the 2022-2023 school year without Foundational courses included.

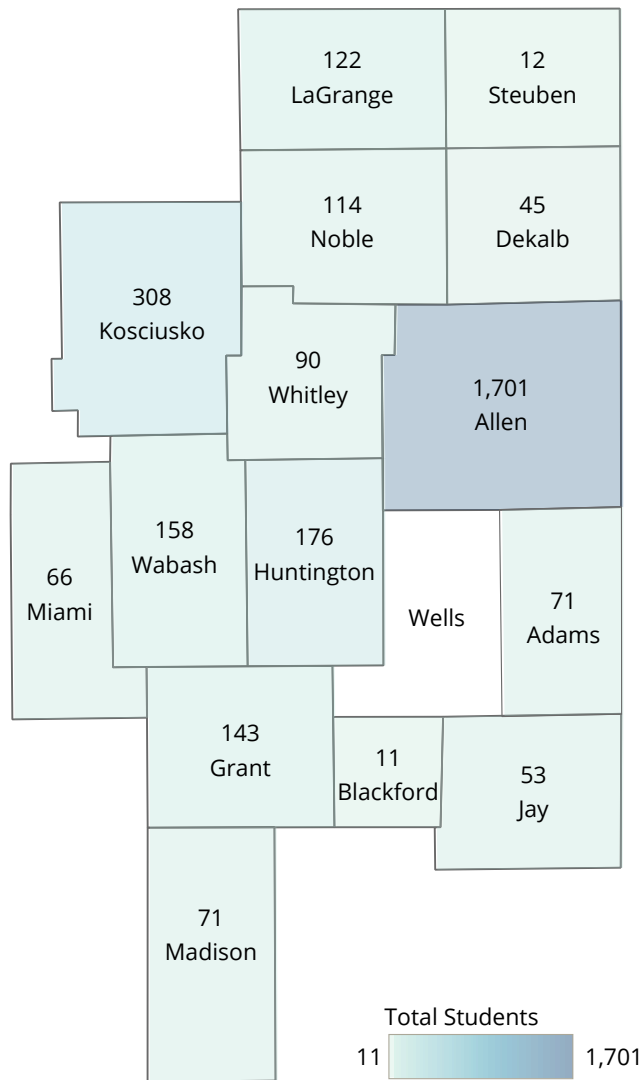
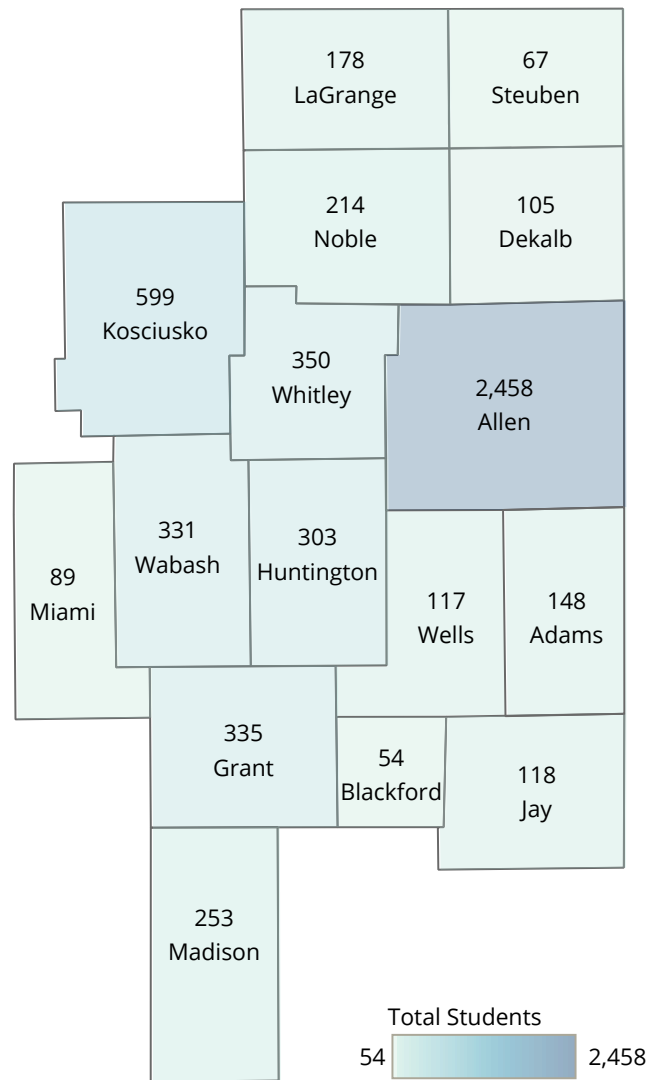


Figure 5. CTE Health Science High School Student Enrollments by County in the 2022-2023 school year with Foundational course enrollments included.



PROMISING PROGRAMS

In addition to Career and Technical Education programming, the research team identified best practices across the career development continuum. Best practices were seen in employer partners, community service organizations, and educational institutions. Though many excellent programs could be highlighted, this report summarizes just a few of the promising programs which exemplify effective strategies across the career development continuum.



The programs/activities/resources were selected for inclusion by the research team because they were referenced by multiple survey and focus group participants, program information is easily accessible and communicated across audiences, and because the programs/activities/resources contain strategies directly related to the Indiana Career Advising Framework developed by EmployIndy and Education Strategy Group. The framework (see figure 6 below) is endorsed by the Indiana Office of Career and Technical Education and was selected because the milestones contained in the framework are considered to be the future benchmark for best practices in career advising and career development.. The working group which supported the development of that framework included Indiana-based practitioners and state educational leaders. The framework includes career-specific milestones which were used in this analysis to identify specific promising programs operating within northeast Indiana.

Figure 6. Indiana Career Advising Framework

Indiana Career Advising Framework

A Learner-Centered Model

Indiana Career Advising Framework is a multi-year process that supports students on their journey from learner to earner. By aligning to research-based practices and milestones that are developmentally appropriate, the Indiana Career Advising Framework supports all Indiana students in meaningful navigation to their postsecondary plans.



EXPLORE Indiana Career Advising Framework Milestones (developed by EmployIndy and Education Strategy Group)

		Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Northeast Indiana Program
Self-Awareness		Students can articulate how their talents connect to possible future careers. Students understand the value of work and how they contribute to society.	Students grasp the importance of participation in their community. Students take steps to build and leverage their network.	Assessing Self Knowledge (ASK) is a five-step framework for college, career, and life readiness. Students develop clear plans for what they would like to do with their lives after high school be it a two years, four years, military, apprenticeship, or short term certificate and trade schools. Through the ASK program, students learn what they need to accomplish today while they are still in school.
	Financial Literacy	Students and families know the benefits of Indiana's 529 program and 21st Century Scholarships. Students understand the basics of saving, spending, and debt.	Students can articulate the cost of their chosen postsecondary options and value of different credentials/degrees Students can develop basic budgets inclusive of costs of living.	<p>Junior Achievement Finance Park provides information and resources to engage middle and high school students in exploring and developing personal financial literacy and money management skills. Through hands-on experiences and with the guidance of adult role models, students learn about lifelong financial issues such as incomes, budgets, personal and family expenses, savings, and retirement planning.</p> <p>Step #4 in the Assessing Self Knowledge (ASK) program helps students learn to identify time, effort and cost to pursue a pathway/career. The activities in Step #4 include: Review/explore how long it takes to complete my training, certification or degree/s; Determine training education cost; Explore ways to pay for education/training; Practice scholarship searching skills; Collect scholarship and grant information.</p> <p>Questa Education Foundation offers Specialized Career Scholar Programs intended for individuals pursuing training encouraged by their employer or working toward a specific career field. There are many opportunities offered in the health sector including: Bowen Center Scholar Programs, Cameron Hospital Scholars Program, Orthopaedics Northeast (ONE) Scholars Program, Parkview Scholar Programs, and Stillwater Hospice Scholars Program. Questa also presents information in high school classes throughout 11 counties in northeast Indiana.</p>

Career Exploration	Students develop an awareness of the breadth of career options. Students explore careers aligned with their completed interest inventory.	Students are exposed to multiple career and postsecondary opportunities through structured exploration opportunities aligned to the students career interest and/or pathway.	<p>The J. Kruse Education Center provides during and after-school programming created to help students discover the career they are passionate about. Based on the 16 Career Clusters, the J. Kruse Education Center provides an array of PODS (Personal Opportunities for Different Skills) that will host the various career clusters/pathways in an experiential format. In addition to the PODS, J. Kruse Education Center is incorporating a Career Coaching Academy where students are given a unique profile based on scientifically reliable assessments. This data and experience-driven profile allow you to make smart, objective career decisions while receiving personalized coaching.</p> <p>Huntington University Health Sciences Camp offers a five-day camp to give students in grades 9-12 introductory experience with nursing, medicine, kinesiology, and occupational therapy. If you are interested in majoring in pre-med or pursuing a career in any of these areas of health science, the camp provides a fun and informational glimpse of college life. Campers stay overnight in an HU residence hall.</p>
Work Ready Skills	Students demonstrate understanding and competency of employability skills through Indiana employability skills standards in 6-8.	Students demonstrate understanding and competency of employability skills through Indiana employability skills standards in 9-10 and 11-12.	<p>Byron Health Center offers paid high school internships for students 16 years and older in a variety of settings. The internship experiences provide 10-20 hours of work experience per week. Byron Health Center is committed to teaching and developing a strong pipeline of young talent.</p>



ENGAGE Indiana Career Advising Framework Milestones (developed by EmployIndy and Education Strategy Group)

		Grades 6-8	Grades 9-10	Northeast Indiana Program
Career Engagement	<p>Students learn the connection between their career interests and the various postsecondary pathway options available to Indiana high school graduates, including how to pay for it.</p>	<p>Students can use Labor Market Information to compare and contrast different career paths of interest. Students engage in careers of interest from job shadows, workplace mentorships, service learning, and/or workplace field trips.</p>	<p>Junior Achievement of Northern Indiana hosts a two-day interactive career expo for 8th grade students in northeast Indiana, called JA JobSpark. This event is meant to “spark” an interest in students and get them excited for their future. Students will take part in fun, interactive activities in various career clusters, explore new opportunities, and cultivate their interests in regional careers. Students will learn about skills needed for jobs that will be in demand when they graduate while utilizing equipment that is used for those jobs daily.</p>	
Career Through Academics	<p>Students can identify the characteristics of an Indiana high school graduate. Students learn the available high school programming aligned with their career interests. Students select a career pathway as a part of completing an individualized career and academic plan in preparation for high school transition.</p>	<p>Students review their selection of career pathways and individualized career and academic plans and make changes according to interests. Students set and monitor progress toward their postsecondary goals</p>	<p>Project Choices, a partnership between Ivy Tech Community College of Ft. Wayne and ASK, is a program for rising 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th graders to provide college planning and goal-setting. The program aims to prepare students for college and career success by providing: Hands on/interactive college and higher education activities, Career exploration, Financial literacy guidance, Dual Credit and Dual, Enrollment Opportunities, Goal setting, Mentorship and advising connections, and College Career Conversation (C3).</p>	

Work Ready Skills	Students are supported in incorporating employability skills into class-based projects and extra/co curricular activities.	Students demonstrate key employability and citizenship skills. Students develop and practice networking skills. Students apply employability skills to their class-based and extra/co curricular activities.	<p>Project Lead the Way Medical Detectives is a STEM curriculum that allows students to play the role of real-life medical detectives as they collect and analyze medical data to diagnose disease. They solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs, measure and interpret vital signs, examine nervous system structure and function, and investigate disease outbreaks.</p>
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EXPERIENCE Indiana Career Advising Framework Milestones (developed by EmployIndy and Education Strategy Group)

	Grades 9-10	Grades 11-12	Northeast Indiana Program
Career Mastery	Students option for high school coursework that is aligned with their intended postsecondary path and career. Students have a seamless transition to high school and demonstrate on-track metrics at the end of the academic year.	Students engage in a culminating experience or attain a credential aligned with their career pathway. Students track their academic plan progress including graduation requirements and coursework aligned to postsecondary intentions.	<p>Students at the Fort Wayne Community Schools Career Academy (formerly called Anthis) have the opportunity to participate in the Dental Careers program of study. Through this program students explore the careers of dental assisting, hygiene, and dental laboratory. The program has a simulated dental office allowing for hands-on opportunities for students to become proficient with infection control procedures, dental and medical terminology and dental instrumentation. Students exiting this program matriculate to college at high rates and have the opportunity to work as dental assistants while attending college. PARENT QUOTE: "She walked out of the program with a job as a dental assistant making \$18hr per hour. She is currently in the Biology program at IUPUI."</p> <p>Whitko Career Academy (WCA) created a connected career preparation experience for students in grades 7-12. All 7th and 8th grade students in Whitko Community Schools participate in a semester-long rotation of courses. Ninth grade students have the opportunity to start taking entry level Career and Technical Education courses. Through the Certified Clinical Medical Assistant program at WCA students earn a recognized industry credential and participate in a work-based experience. STUDENT QUOTE: "Through this program [CCMA CTE Program] we get certifications, and are able to have experiences at Parkview Whitley and local Doctor's offices."</p>
Postsecondary Planning	Students are informed of different postsecondary options. Students set goals related to their postsecondary intentions. Students and families will engage in critical conversations to develop a plan for postsecondary together.	Students complete milestones that ensure a seamless transition for their documented postsecondary plan before high school graduation (i.e. FAFSA completion, college applications, apprenticeship enrollment, On The Job orientation).	Project Leadership creates and accelerates educational initiatives and programs that promote educational attainment and degree/certificate completion. Project Leadership services strive to help students: (1) Find their Way in the career/major path that fits best with their interests and aptitudes; (2) Learn the critical steps for how to Pay for a post-secondary education;(3) Develop a plan to Stay on their post-secondary path through successful completion.

Indiana Career Advising Framework Milestones (developed by EmployIndy and Education Strategy Group)

Career Experience	<p>Students conduct an interview of someone in a career field of interest. Students complete a job exposure experience in an area of career interest before selecting a career pathway.</p>	<p>Students complete a career immersion experience before high school graduation (i.e. internship, youth apprenticeship, paid work experience etc.).</p>	<p>Parkview Health offers a work-based learning experience called FutureREADY. The FutureREADY program allows students to use their internship hours to explore a variety of careers at Parkview. Students will select their areas of interest from a provided list of departments. Parkview's Education Services team will then place students in six, week-long observations. From those six observations, the student will then identify their top one to three areas where they'd like to spend the remainder of their semester.</p> <p>Columbia City High School requires all 10th grade students to participate in a half- or full-day job shadows.</p>
Work Ready Skills	<p>Students incorporate key employability and citizenship skills in their career experiences. Students work together in teams on extra/co curricular activities.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate employability and citizenship skills in their career experiences. Students engage in networking activities with peers and professionals.</p>	<p>Junior Achievement 3DE provides students with learning experiences built around real-world, real-time business case challenges from regional and national companies. Students then use core subjects like math and English to solve the cases.</p>

GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Description

Survey respondents and focus group participants were asked various questions to help determine gaps and challenges in the 7-12 healthcare career development ecosystem. The gaps identified are not common to every participant, but are representative of the larger issues faced by many participants. Identified gaps and challenges are categorized into five overarching themes: communication, coordination, student preparedness, employer preparedness, experience scarcity.

The section below highlights the 11 gaps/challenges consistently shared by research participants. Participants' quotes, survey results, and program enrollment numbers are used to exemplify the stated gap/challenge.

Communication

1 Information on career and college events and experiences available to students in grades 7-12 is not easily accessed or communicated.

The geographic footprint of northeast Indiana is large and contains hundreds of healthcare programs, employers, and healthcare-adjacent organizations. The system does not have a consistent way to communicate opportunities and experiences across its stakeholder groups. This is true for all key stakeholders we heard from in this study, from parents to employers. While many stakeholders are building effective programs and experiences, many noted significant challenges in communicating the availability of the programs and coordinating meaningful student experiences.

2 There is confusion for employers and educators about who is the best person to connect with when attempting to coordinate/provide Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs) or Career-Relevant Learning Experiences (CRLEs).

Employers and educators want to know who is the most effective/efficient point-of-contact on the other end of the relationship to move the program forward. Moving the program forward might include planning, starting the program, and obtaining the necessary paperwork and forms (application paperwork or student evaluation feedback).

“Communication is a roadblock for companies that want to reach out to schools. I wish there was more communication with outside entities on how to partner with schools.”

-Healthcare Employer

“I think once you know the right person at the school there aren't [any] challenges. The schools have a variety of titles who are the best to connect with.”

-Healthcare Employer

“Knowing who to contact in the different school districts is a challenge and [so is] knowing which contact will be the most effective at connecting me with the teachers.”

-Community Service Provider

“I'm struggling to get feedback on the student performance - it's close to the end of the year and I haven't gotten the midway evaluation sent back from many of the employers.”

-Teacher

3 WBL experiences are often based on a relationship held by one person at a school or institution/organization. When the relationship holder leaves there are often gaps in WBLE availability.

When those in charge of WBL or WBL experiences leave, the loss of momentum means that some students are not given the opportunity for exposure to the healthcare field and healthcare employers lose out on building relationships with potential future employees.

“The relationship is often based on a single person, if one person leaves, the experiences are canceled.”

- Health Sciences Teacher

Coordination

4

There is a need for more personnel support to develop, coordinate, and oversee the work-based learning partnerships for both schools and employers.

There are instances at schools where there is no work based learning coordinator, or the coordinator is a full-time teacher. Responsibilities for maintaining and building the program falls on the shoulders of personnel with minimal time and capacity. The same can be said for employers too. Many employers attempting to coordinate student experiences have personnel overseeing the program with multiple roles and limited capacity.

- A review of school counselor survey responses showed one overarching thing school counselors would change to improve students' success in healthcare education: Increase capacity to develop healthcare partnerships including adding personnel to assist with the development of more work-based and career related experiences, and to support the communication of available opportunities to staff and students.
- When asked about their top two challenges when offering healthcare related experiences for students, many teachers stated the time involved and effort required to coordinate the experiences and find willing employer partners (42%, 11 out of 26 responses).

"The coordinating of all that [work based learning experiences] is difficult."

-Healthcare Employer

"[We are] at capacity for our teacher, we need in-school support with an external role to build and cultivate partnerships."

-School Counselor

"We currently partner with Angola High School in their careers program for high school students. I wish we could offer this experience to the other high schools in the area to reach more students."

-Healthcare Employer

"Having a work based learning coordinator would be amazing. [My teachers and I] do all of the brokering of relationships."

-Education Administrator

"Anything to lighten the load to increase communication and connection."

-Healthcare Employer

"We're fortunate enough we've got EmployIndy to work to gather the information for us. They're like the clearinghouse, we have that advantage. When it comes to getting out to other communities, it's a challenge."

-Healthcare Employer

5

Program providers aren't always aware of what other providers are offering and miss opportunities to strengthen collective impact through coordinated efforts.

There is an abundance of great work happening in northeast Indiana. However, if organizations had more intentional time to learn about one another's efforts and to collaborate, the ecosystem would be strengthened, providing expanded experiences for the region's students.

"If we had some type of consistent regional advisory board meetings with institutions that have a common vision. It would be really helpful."

- Community Service Provider

"We have to get out of our silos...we need to start working together. We need to communicate on how we can work together and provide services throughout the community."

- Community Service Provider

Student Preparedness

6

Students lack key employability skills needed to be successful in healthcare Work-Based Learning Experiences.

Healthcare employers shared that many students participating in work based learning experiences were challenging to work with because the students did not possess some of the basic employability skills needed like communication, eye contact, initiative, and attention to detail. This belief was shared across other stakeholders including health science teachers, postsecondary institutions, and community service providers.

"Students need to come prepared for a professional environment - perhaps higher standards of behavior than even the school requires."

-Healthcare Employer

"That [lack of professionalism] is a problem and it seems to get worse and worse. I have not seen anything that seems to work."

- Postsecondary Partner

"Not a clear understanding of professionalism/ self-presentation in the workplace."

- Healthcare Employer



Students lack sufficient understanding of the wide variety of careers available in healthcare.

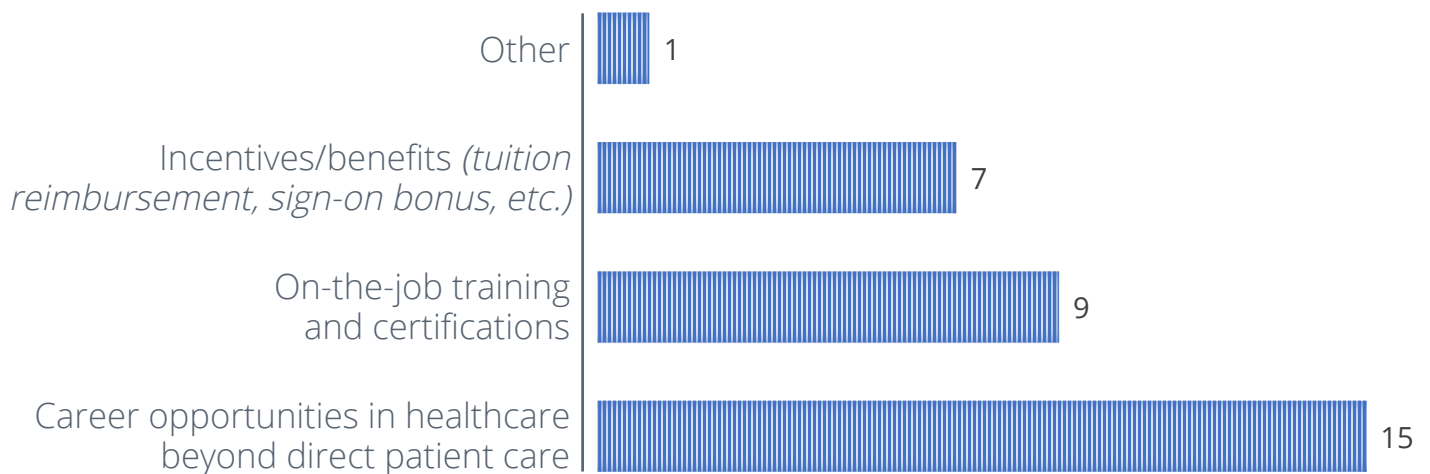
Most students have a basic understanding of the careers available in healthcare. Their understanding is typically limited to careers involving direct patient care like doctors and nurses. This lack of understanding also includes career progression opportunities within healthcare.

“One thing we hear often is that young people don’t know where to go or who to turn to if they’re interested in learning more about a career, or the skills and knowledge required for a career. When it comes to healthcare careers, many students only have a surface-level understanding of the types of jobs and opportunities available to them.”

- Community Service Provider

The chart below shows 94% of healthcare employers surveyed (n=15) wish students knew more about career opportunities in healthcare beyond those involving direct patient care (Survey Question: What are 1-2 things you wish high school students understood better about your healthcare opportunities?).

What are 1-2 things you wish high schools students understood better about your healthcare opportunities?

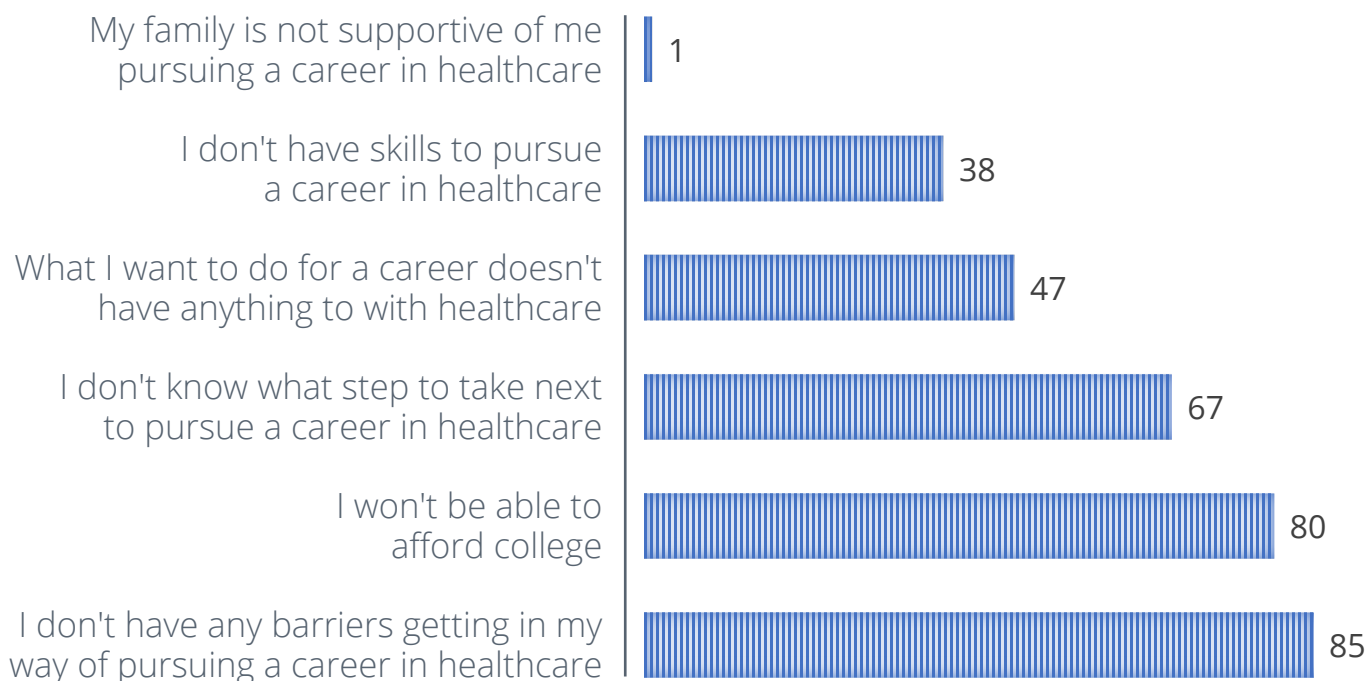


8

Students are unaware of what steps to take to pursue a career in healthcare and struggle to understand how to pay for healthcare related college programs.

The chart below shows that 30% of health science students (n=80) believe they won't be able to afford college and 25% (n=67) don't know what the next step is to pursue a career in healthcare (Survey Question: What barriers might get in your way of pursuing a career in healthcare?).

What barriers might get in your way of pursuing a career in healthcare?



“One improvement that could be made is talking more about the college options that are out there so we as students can become more aware of the colleges for healthcare if we don't know much about the options available.”

- Health Sciences Student

“Help with knowing what step to take next.”

- Health Sciences Student

“Explaining how to get the certain degree I want in healthcare.”

- Health Sciences Student

“Give me clear steps on what to do.”

- Health Sciences Student

Employer Preparedness

9 In many instances employers are not prepared to host high school students and don't know what the students are able or allowed to do.

Students shared, in many work based learning experiences, they often end up either not doing anything or doing tasks unrelated to their course. Employer hosts not being “prepared” turns into a poor student experience (this is something students described as not having a sense of “welcome” or “belonging”).

“There’s a lot of missed opportunities at the employee level in healthcare to be excited and recruit some new people. We always hear, ‘We’re so short staffed, we need more, we need more.’ But when students arrive they are told by their worksite mentor/host, ‘we don’t have anything going on today.’ A goal of these experiences should be to try to get them [students] excited.”

- Health Sciences Teacher

“Part of the problem is the lack of communication, the very first rotation we did they had no idea we were going to be there.”

- Health Sciences Student

“They don’t really know what they should let us do. There’s more I could be doing.”

- Health Sciences Student

“If we received a list of things students were able to do or should be learning, it would be easier for us to come up with for a particular day. A lot of times for us, it’s a guessing game.”

- Healthcare Employer

Experience Scarcity

10

There are not enough relevant and engaging healthcare WBLEs and CRLEs available to meet the demand.

Students and teachers are yearning for more WBLEs (internships, apprenticeships, etc.) and CRLEs (job shadowing, guest speakers, etc.). CRLEs and student-employer touch points need to begin at younger grade levels; grade 7 and 8, minimally, but even earlier when possible.

“More options for high schoolers, the only option I am aware of right now is Anthis which is a great program. I just wish there were more job shadow options for students under 18 in the healthcare field.”

- Health Sciences Student

“I want a group of people to come meet me and tell me about their past difficulties and give me advice that will make the steps easier for me.”

- Health Sciences Students

“There is a growing need for a wide variety of internships within the healthcare field.”

- School Counselor

“There’s a huge gap in the 9th and 10th grade year before you can access the CTE program. There’s a lot of opportunity for kids to lose interest or not even make the grade. We have a huge gap in those two years. If we can fill some void in 9th and 10th grade.”

- Parent

“When business and industry comes in to talk, my kids really listen. It’s nice to have a voice that they don’t hear every day.”

- Parent

“Get kids to job shadow as many times as possible.”

- School Counselor

“I would want to go visit/internship places revolving around health care jobs more.”

- Health Sciences Student

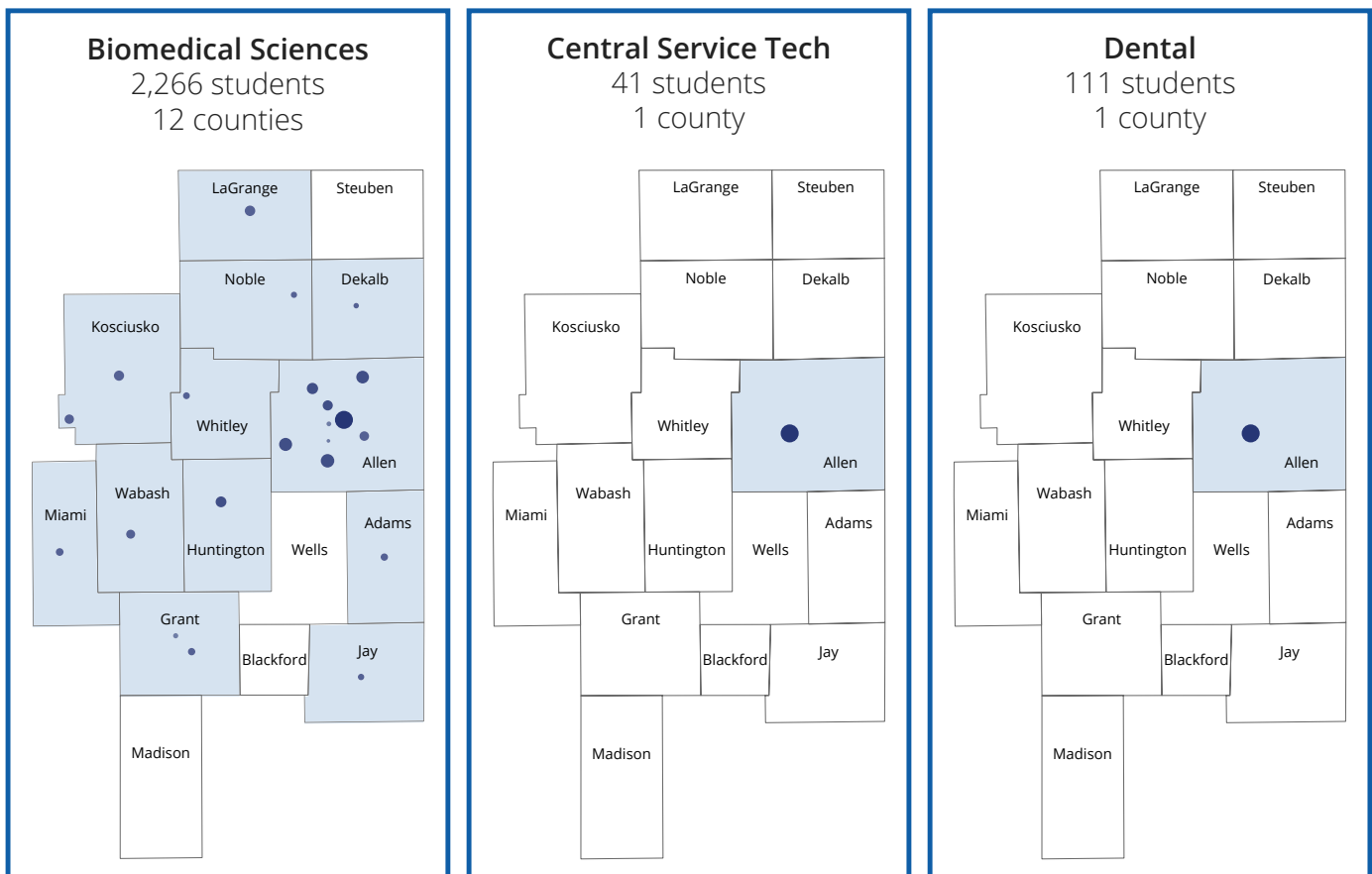
Survey Data:

- 48% of students (n=131) think a job shadow opportunity would teach them more about the careers available in healthcare.
- 20% of students (n=56) have participated in a healthcare related job shadow.
- 25% of students (n=69) are not aware of any work-based experiences available to them in healthcare.
- 47% of students (n=126) haven’t participated in a healthcare related experience with an employer.
- 11% of students (n=31) have participated in a healthcare-related internship.

Students do not have access to many of the health science CTE course offerings.

There are eight [Indiana CTE health science programs](#) available for schools and career centers to offer. However, Central Service Technician/Surgical Technician, Dental, Exercise Science, Medical Assisting, and Pharmacy Tech are offered in three or fewer counties. Figure 7 shows a Snapshot of each Next Level Program of Study and the locations where specific health science programs were offered in the 2022-2023 school year. For example, it's likely that only students living in or near Allen County had access to Pharmacy Tech during the 2022-2023 school year.

Figure 7. High School Program Locations by County.



*Data used was from the Fall CTE Enrollment Count and was pulled from InTERS.

Figure 7. High School Program Locations by County (continued from page 28).



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of action steps are possibilities for the Region 8 Education Service Center leadership team along with the healthcare consortium to consider. Each of the recommended actions align with one or more of the gaps listed above.



1

Identify an organization to support the coordination of career relevant learning opportunities and work-based learning opportunities.

The regional “intermediary” organization coordinates, designs experiences, bridges communication, and also can provide insurance solutions. The selected organization (new or existing) must have strong relationships with education and workforce. Challenges/ Gaps Addressed: A1, A2, A3, B4, C6, C7, D9, E10.

- Identify the organization to serve as the intermediary (examples include [YouthForce Nola](#) New Orleans, [EmployIndy Talent Bound](#) Indianapolis, and [Pencil Foundation](#) Nashville).
- Assemble an advisory committee to identify the key roles and responsibilities of the intermediary organization.
 - This might require the advisory committee to conduct various study visits to research best practices around the country.
- Determine the staffing needs of this intermediary organization.
- Use the healthcare asset database from this research study to develop a menu of experiences available to schools and students in northeast Indiana. The list should be concrete and specific (e.g., job shadow, internship, jobsite tour, guest speaker, etc.).

2

Expand program capacity and training programs for high school students in key areas aligned to workforce demand.

Challenges/Gaps Addressed: C6, C7, E11.

- Convene a working group to determine which programs need to be expanded and where the programs need to be offered.
 - Consider comparing student enrollment and completion data to the number of positions available by county in the short-, medium-, and long-term.
 - Programs at capacity should be expanded to meet the needs of regional employers.
 - Programs below capacity should incorporate marketing strategies to encourage awareness and enrollment
- Determine which program providers are best suited to offer programs that allow high school students to learn key skills, earn recognized credentials, and participate in work based learning experiences.
- Consider expanding capacity by offering flexible training and certification options for students. Examples include:
 - Virtual options like [KLR Medical Certification Training School](#)
 - Workforce training providers like [Freedom Academy](#) or [Ivy Tech Community College](#), and
 - Non traditional solutions like hosting a program on the worksite - a good example of this is the [RAMP program](#) offered through Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation).



3

Expand student access to engaging healthcare guest speakers.

There is a need for more engaging and relatable guest speakers to create excitement about careers in healthcare. The first connection students have with careers in healthcare must be positive. Gaps/Challenges Addressed: C7, E10.

- Create or purchase an online platform to host virtual guest speakers and as a connection point for employers, students, and educators (e.g., Pathful Connect).
- Identify a person or persons to manage and operate the online platform.
- Gather a list of employers willing to provide a virtual guest speaker presentation.
 - Post these on the online platform and allow teachers to request specific guest speakers (all communication would be funneled through the third party so the employer is not bombarded with requests).
- Gather a list of teacher-requested sessions and post those on the online platform.
 - Post these on the online platform and allow employers to self select which sessions they would be interested in delivering.
- Record guest speaker sessions and create a searchable repository of northeast Indiana healthcare employer guest speaker sessions for teachers and students to access on demand.
- Incorporate a marketing strategy to reach key audiences throughout the region.

4

Expand student access to high quality job shadowing (observation) opportunities.

Challenges/Gaps Addressed: C7, E10.

- Collectively define what makes a job shadow “high quality” with input from employers, teachers, and students (e.g., trained worksite mentors/supervisors, student training plans, engaging activities, feedback and evaluation, etc.).
- Create a list of each employer hosting a job shadowing (observation) opportunity including timing/duration, departments available to shadow, and contact information for the experience.
- Provide this information to a regional intermediary organization to post on a webpage.
- Incorporate a marketing strategy to reach key audiences throughout the region.
- Ensure all shadowing opportunities include opportunities for feedback from students and teachers to the respective departments.

5

Increase student proficiency in healthcare-specific professional/success skills.

Challenges/Gaps Addressed: C6.

- Utilize the healthcare consortium to design a micro Governor's Work Ethic Certificate program specifically for healthcare in northeast Indiana.
 - Identify 3-6 key skills and traits that healthcare professionals think are most important.
 - Create a healthcare related acronym to represent the skills (the Governor's Work Ethic Certificate is modeled after a program called "PRIDE." Click on link and scroll to page 11 to learn more about the PRIDE program).
 - Create criteria for how students demonstrate proficiency of the identified skills and traits (How will these skills be validated? Who will validate?).
 - Develop a process to receive, review, and award certificates.
 - Determine the incentive for students to earn the certificate.
 - Market and launch the program in the health science programs identified through this research study.
- There are many "operational" agreements in place, however, there are no agreements which intentionally allocate a specific number of positions to a particular school or incentivize the hiring of students who have shown a commitment to the industry (e.g., preference for a student who has completed an advanced CTE course in an aligned career field, participated in relevant work experience, and earned an industry recognized credential).
 - Consider creating affiliation agreements that incentivize hosting students in WRLEs who have completed an advanced level health science CTE course, earned a healthcare related certification or have work experience in a healthcare setting.
 - Determine how the affiliation agreements might include a specific allocation of positions for each participating school or career center. Use the CTE joint services agreement as an example to allocate seats equitably based on ADM enrollment counts. Give schools / career centers a specific deadline to fill the positions and open the positions to a "first-come, first-serve" approach after the deadline has passed.

6

Create information to clearly define what high school students participating in work based learning experiences can and cannot do in various healthcare settings.

Challenges/Gaps Addressed: D9.

- Create an agreed upon work-based learning training template to be utilized for each of the eight Next Level Program of Study health science programs. The training template will be filled in by working groups described in the next bullet.
- Assemble Health Science Next Level Program of Study (NLPS) working groups, for each of the eight Health Science programs, with 2-3 industry professionals (preferably the employees working directly with students) and 2-3 high school teachers to create sample work-based learning training plans.
 - Each plan should include what students should be able to do or what they're learning in class (course competencies) and list the aligned tasks it would be reasonable to expect students to carry out (from heavily supervised activities to minimally supervised activities) in a healthcare setting.
 - Each plan should include a method for evaluating student proficiency of the worksite tasks.
 - Each plan should include a list of the hazardous occupations students are not allowed to participate in.
- Share the sample training plans with health science teachers and healthcare employers throughout the region.
 - The plans will allow for easy customization, but will provide clarity as employers begin the process of creating meaningful experiences for students at their workplace.



7

Develop a startup guide for healthcare employers desiring to launch work-based learning experiences.

Challenges/Gaps Addressed: D9, E10.

- Identify a group of employers who have established internship or apprenticeship programs and their partnering educational institutions to lead this work.
- Include the key steps. Processes, documentation, and affiliation agreements.
- Consider including information about the return on investment for launching an internship program.
 - To identify the cost of finding, hiring, and training a new employee versus the cost of finding, training interns.
 - Determine the timeline for when a new hire becomes profitable for the company and the timeline for when an intern becomes profitable.
 - Compare the retention rates of new hires vs. interns who converted to full-time employees.

8

Strengthen the collective impact of community resources through monthly convenings.

Challenges/Gaps Addressed: A1, A2, B5.

- Host a monthly connection meeting for community service providers, employers, and educators to hear information about regional happenings in the healthcare sector, but also providing time for breakout sessions for each organization type to collaborate.
- Continue to provide regular digital communication to all partner organizations invested in the healthcare career development ecosystem.

9

Develop and launch a marketing effort to provide information about healthcare career development information, activities, events, programs, and postsecondary navigation resources at all three levels (explore, engage, experience).

Challenges/Gaps Addressed: A1, C7, C8.

- The resource should include information about the variety of healthcare careers in northeast Indiana, the benefits of pursuing a career in healthcare, financial aid information, scholarship opportunities, college transitions, and direct connection to organizations who provide students with support in these areas. The database can be a starting point for this online resource and marketing effort.
- Once the website is built, it should be marketed widely across northeast Indiana to key audiences including parents, students, teachers, administrators, school counselors, employers, postsecondary, and community service providers.

10

Verify and update the healthcare asset database twice per year to reflect the most current information.

The regional intermediary staff should be utilized to update the database on a recurring basis. Challenges/Gaps Addressed: A1, A2, B5.

- The database should be updated to include the most relevant descriptors and contact information.
- Once the database is updated, an online platform should be created that allows users to search for their desired experiences.

CONCLUSION

There is momentum in northeast Indiana for developing a connected healthcare talent ecosystem. The momentum is defined by the strong levels of engagement from organizations including secondary and postsecondary education providers, healthcare employers, community service providers, and workforce alignment organizations (e.g., Northeast Indiana Works).

The establishment of a healthcare consortium and the intentional focus of grant making efforts to support career development for students in grades 7-12 focused on healthcare are effective strategies to build upon. The information collected through this research study along with intentional steps already in place will help to support strategic decision making and the expansion of healthcare career development in northeast Indiana and throughout the state.



