

# State Policy Recommendations for Aligned Advising



## WHAT IS ALIGNED ADVISING?

**Aligned Advising** provides a model in which high-quality advising is an expectation for every student, not just a select few. This approach ensures that such support is an integral part of both high school and postsecondary education and training. It is grounded in deep collaboration between K-12, postsecondary, and workforce partners to ensure that students have access to a wide range of services and supports as they transition to college, career, and life. In our research, we consistently found that the connection across these systems is insufficient, and replicates silos that lead to

inequitable access and outcomes for students, particularly those who have been marginalized in our education and workforce systems. Examples of these gaps include a lack of attention and resources toward supporting career development and a hesitance to clearly define roles across student support experts, leading to misaligned advising practices across college and career planning staff. State policymakers have a critical role to play in addressing these gaps and ensuring that all students have the support necessary to navigate the maze from high school to college and career.



## STATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In today’s rapidly changing world, the need for a cohesive, integrated approach to education and workforce readiness is more important than ever. Aligned Advising emerges as a key strategy in this context, aiming to bridge the gap between K–12, higher education, and the workforce. This holistic approach is critical to ensuring that students are not only prepared for the future, but are also provided with equitable access to opportunities. Education Strategy Group’s comprehensive research and interviews have led to a set of policy recommendations, each designed to address specific challenges within education and workforce systems. These recommendations align to a range of on-the-ground strategies, from fostering cross-sector partnerships to enhancing data-driven advising, all aimed at bolstering Aligned Advising efforts.

These policy recommendations are particularly important for state leaders, school districts, and higher education institutions. They provide a roadmap for creating a more integrated and effective system that prioritizes the needs of students and provides innovative support and capacity building for practitioners. By adopting these strategies, stakeholders can work together more effectively, leveraging their collective resources and expertise to support students’ transitions from high school to career. Aligned Advising is not just about providing a warm handoff for students; it is about reshaping and strengthening education and workforce systems to be more equitable, inclusive, and responsive to diverse student needs. This set of case studies and recommendations serve as both a call to action and a guide for those committed to the success of students.

### 1 CONVENE CROSS-SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE COHESION

State leaders must proactively coordinate how partners outside of the higher education and K–12 systems are supporting the efforts of counselors and advisors to ensure alignment across partners and equitable access for students.

► **Invest in Partnership Infrastructure:** Provide state-level funding that encourages systematic alignment across partners and builds in accountability mechanisms to ensure strong implementation. College access organizations, pathways intermediaries, and youth-serving organizations should all have access to public funding that encourages coherent local support.

### 2 DEVELOP ROBUST LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS

Define cross-sector data infrastructure and operationalize a longitudinal system that allows for proactive advising in real-time, provides analytical data for research, and prevents duplicate data collection. This data needs to be accessible to all adults who support students, with greater emphasis on career advisors and community-based organizations who are also supporting young people to enter the workforce after high school.

► **Leverage Strategic Data Sharing:** Facilitate the establishment of MOUs and articulation agreements among K–12 districts, two-year institutions, and four-year institutions through state and regional policy.

► **Promote Consistency in College and Career Data Reporting:** To ensure coherence, state leaders need to carefully consider the indicators that educators are expected to report on and align these requirements to the development of statewide frameworks and standards.

### 3 PROVIDE CLEAR AND COMPREHENSIVE ADVISING STANDARDS

States should assemble leaders from K–12 schools, higher education, and the workforce to develop statewide college and career advising standards that clearly define expectations and grade-level milestones for students. State and district leaders can use the forthcoming District Enabling Conditions Framework for Effective Advising as a guide for implementing systemic changes that lead to improved advising structures and practices.

### 4 IMPROVE THE CAPACITY OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO RESPOND TO THE ADVISING STANDARDS

A key component of the development of standards is to invest in capacity-building mechanisms that provide practitioners the necessary support and resources to implement advising standards effectively.

► **Clearly Define Roles and Responsibilities:** It is critical for states to work with district and school leaders to collectively define student support roles across and within systems. This is key to ensuring cohesion and ownership across partners.

► **Incentivize with Funding:** Provide state-level grant opportunities that incentivize data sharing and encourage the braiding of state and local funding to sustainably support shared counseling and advising positions.

► **Systematize Shared Training and Professional Development:** By offering coordinated professional development across higher education and K–12 systems, state leaders can ensure that each of the sectors thoroughly understands the expectations of the other and that the vision for student success and support is collectively defined.

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## ABOUT THIS WORK

Education Strategy Group (ESG) works with America's education, business, and civic leaders to expand economic opportunity and mobility by increasing educational attainment. We are driven by the conviction that a robust education system aligned with workforce demands leads to a stronger, more equitable society.

In today's rapidly changing world, the need for a cohesive, integrated approach to education and workforce readiness is more important than ever. High-quality advising is essential for helping students navigate their options and opening the doors to postsecondary and career success. Aligned Advising is a key strategy for bridging the gap between K–12, higher education, and the workforce to ensure that students are not only prepared for the future, but are also provided with equitable access to opportunities. Learn more about ESG's [Aligned Advising work](#) and explore our recent [case studies](#) illustrating these principles in practice.