

LESSONS LEARNED: 2024-2026

Great Lakes CCR Advocacy Network

September 2026

A Hypothesis from the Joyce Foundation

The Joyce Foundation is a private philanthropy that strategically invests in policy research, development, and advocacy to promote racial equity and economic mobility for young people in the Great Lakes region. The Foundation's Education & Economic Mobility program area is explicitly focused on closing income and race disparities in college and career success through a three-pronged strategy: expanding access to effective educators, promoting college & career readiness in high school, and supporting post-secondary success.

With investments across five states, Joyce distributes grant funding to a wide variety of organizations dedicated to improving quality of life in the Great Lakes. In 2024, the Education & Economic Mobility team posed a question: **Might the lessons that grantees are learning in their place-based advocacy contexts spark new ideas for out-of-state peers?**

To answer this question, the Foundation identified ten organizations to participate in the Great Lakes College and Career Readiness (CCR) Advocacy Network. Over the course of two years, network members engaged in a collaborative, exploratory experience, aimed at bolstering connectivity, CCR content knowledge, and strategic dexterity individually and collectively.

The hypothesis? By cross-pollinating knowledge and resources across state lines, the network would accumulate compounding influence in CCR policymaking in the Great Lakes.

This report seeks to capture key lessons in advocacy that members discovered in community with one another.

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INTRODUCTION

Meet the Network

Meet the Network Organizations

To create a fertile environment for issue-specific content exploration, the Advocacy Network observed a narrow focus on [college and career readiness](#) policies. Therefore, network organizations were identified for their historic or potential impact on CCR interventions at the state level. Ultimately composed of two organizations from each of Joyce's five focus states, the Network invited role-alike representatives to consider new opportunities to learn from and support one another.

To the right, click on each organization's name to explore their website. Navigate to the [appendix](#) for detailed organizational profiles.



Knowledge, Relationships, and Tactics for Long-Term Influence

Before convening the Network for the first time, the Joyce Foundation articulated short- and medium-term outcomes to inform the design of engagement structures and activities. Desired outcomes were envisioned across three progress categories: **Knowledge, Tactics, and Relationships**.

KNOWLEDGE

Developing and deepening knowledge of key policy issues in college and career readiness

TACTICS

Strengthening advocacy competencies through regionally-tested tools and tactics

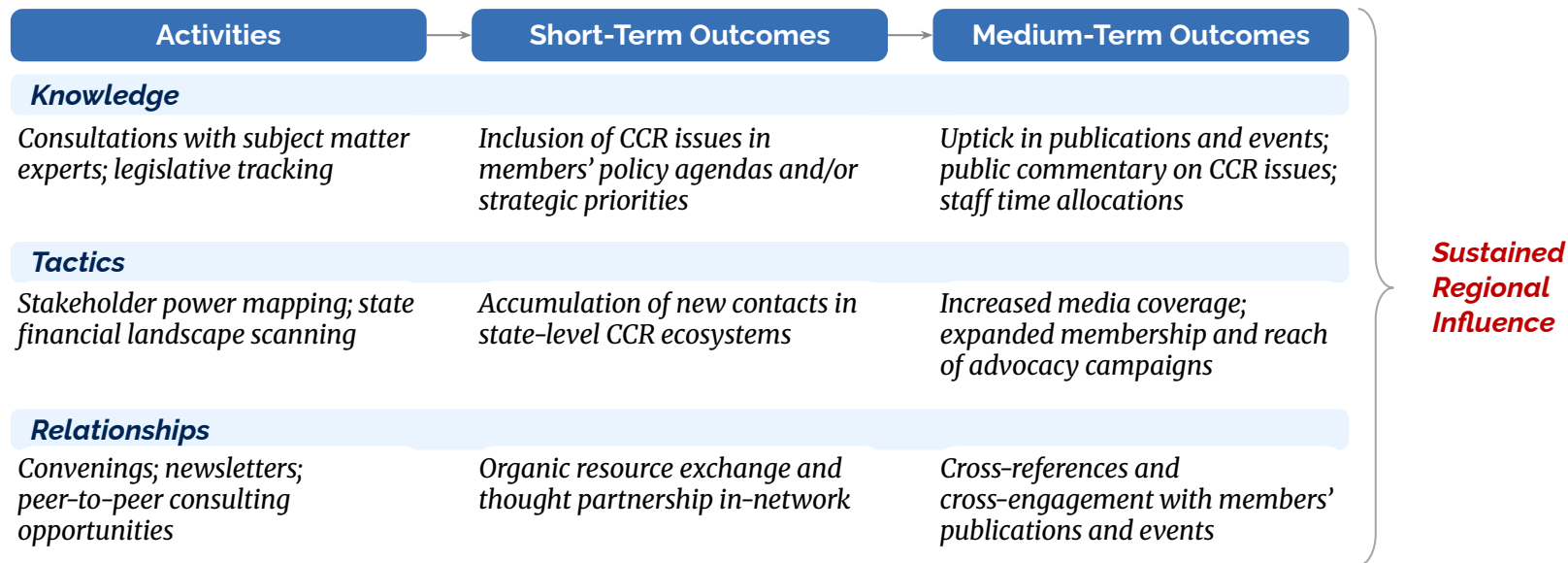
RELATIONSHIPS

Cultivating regional connectedness and strategic engagement

Taken together, intermediate outcomes across all three categories were mapped to the Network's highest aspiration: ***Individually and collectively, Network members expand influence over key policy and systems-level enabling conditions to meaningfully increase the number of Great Lakes youth who can access and succeed in high-quality pathways to postsecondary and career success.***

Knowledge, Relationships, and Tactics for Long-Term Influence

Network Influence Logic Model [Sample]



The Work of Networking: Convening, Coaching, and Consulting

The Foundation's desired outcomes inspired the design of the Network's learning and engagement arc. Each calendar year, Network members were invited to tailored convening, coaching, and consulting opportunities, both synchronously and asynchronously.

CONVENING

CONSULTING

COACHING

In-person convenings took place each Fall and Spring. Each two-day event was designed to balance formal and informal community building environments with prescribed, content- and tactic-focused agenda items. In the Network's second year, Network members stepped into a hosting role, allowing for deeper reflections on the role of *place* in advocacy work. Additionally, the Network gathered for brief, virtual convenings in January 2025 and 2026.

- *October 28-29, 2024 | Chicago, IL*
- *May 19-20, 2025 | Chicago, IL*
- *November 8-9, 2025 | Columbus, OH*
- *June 8-9, 2026 | Minneapolis, MN*

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CONVENING

CONSULTING

COACHING

The Joyce Foundation partnered with [Education Strategy Group](#) (ESG) to offer personalized coaching and technical assistance to Network members. ESG coaching sessions took place every 4–8 weeks, depending on members' priorities and capacity. In addition to discrete technical assistance activities, ESG facilitated all ten teams through a prolonged power mapping exercise, intended to identify specific tactics for influencing CCR policy issues at the state level. Power maps are explored in-depth in the next section of this report.

Education Strategy Group is a mission-driven consulting firm that supports America's education, business, and civic leaders to expand opportunity by increasing educational attainment. ESG specializes in strengthening the high stakes transition points that youth and adults face along their educational journeys.

The Work of Networking: Convening, Coaching, and Consulting

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CONVENING

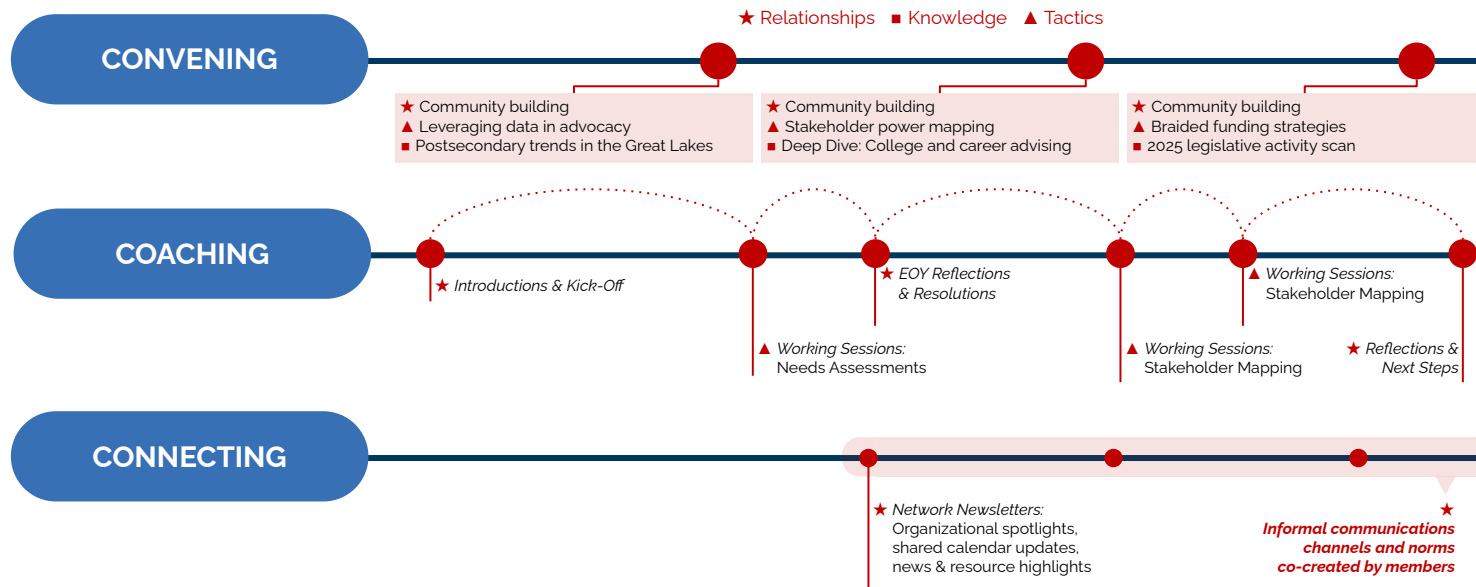
CONSULTING

COACHING

Soon after the Network was officially launched in 2024, news headlines began forecasting the dissolution of the federal Department of Education alongside major shifts in federal funding. Because advocates found themselves in a rapidly shifting environment, tried-and-true strategies and tactics had to be continuously reevaluated. Accordingly, Network activities were designed to offer “just-in-time” consulting opportunities, providing members with quick access to thought partners and resources. In many cases, “consultants” were peer Network members; other times, Joyce or ESG solicited targeted support from external experts, e.g. [All4Ed](#), [Advance CTE](#), [Data Quality Campaign](#), and [Rodel](#).

The Work of Networking: Convening, Coaching, and Consulting

Network Learning & Engagement Arc [12-Month Sample]





KNOWLEDGE

CCR Policy Trends in the Great Lakes

Policy Windows Drive Learning

Effective advocates capitalize on policy windows. In order to do so, they must continuously evolve their understanding of policy trends locally and nationally. With its focus on CCR policy, the Network offered a platform for members to compare and contrast how national narratives were actually showing up in their respective state legislatures.

POLICY ISSUE

Pathways

Advanced Coursework

High School Redesign

Admissions & Aid Simplification

Advising & Navigation

NATIONAL TRENDS

- Expanding access to high-quality career pathways, CTE programs and work-based learning opportunities
- Increasing investments in apprenticeships
- Aligning pathway design with accountability measures, occasionally implicating funding

IN THE GREAT LAKES

Illinois S 58 (2025)

Directs DCEO to create a technical assistance program for emerging regional manufacturing partnerships connecting employers with secondary and postsecondary students

Indiana S 448 (2025)

The IN Management Performance Hub, in collaboration with the DoE, must collect and report student income data and publish credential information on the department's website

Policy Windows Drive Learning

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POLICY ISSUE

Pathways

Advanced Coursework

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Advising & Navigation

NATIONAL TRENDS

- Increasing access to and participation in dual enrollment and other early postsecondary opportunities by expanding eligibility requirements and budget allocations
- Devising mechanisms for automatic enrollment in advanced coursework

IN THE GREAT LAKES

Minnesota S 510 (2025)

Auto-enrollment pilot program; participating schools will develop a policy to automatically enroll qualified students in applicable advanced coursework

Ohio S 19 (2026)

Automatically enrolls middle school students in Algebra I

Policy Windows Drive Learning

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POLICY ISSUE

Pathways

Advanced Coursework

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Admissions & Aid Simplification

Advising & Navigation

NATIONAL TRENDS

- Altering graduation requirements and accountability systems to allow for more flexibility; emphasizing competency-based demonstrations of learning

IN THE GREAT LAKES

Indiana H 1498 (2025)

Returns the state to an A-F accountability system; school grading methodology mirrors the states Graduates Prepared to Succeed dashboard, featuring metrics along (a) Academic Mastery; (b) Career and Postsecondary Readiness; (c) Communication and Collaboration; (d) Work Ethic; (e) Civic, Financial, and Digital Literacy

Policy Windows Drive Learning

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POLICY ISSUE

Pathways

Advanced Coursework

High School Redesign

Admissions & Aid Simplification

Advising & Navigation

NATIONAL TRENDS

- Piloting, funding, and mandating participation in statewide direct admissions processes
- Simplifying financial aid application processes; expanding financial aid programs for students pursuing in-demand credentials

IN THE GREAT LAKES

Illinois S 3522 (2025)

Creates the Public University Direct Admission Program Act

Minnesota H 1128 (2025) [FAILED]

Public high schools required to participate in the direct admissions program

Ohio H 96 (2025)

Establishes guaranteed admissions program and direct admissions pilot

Policy Windows Drive Learning

Effective advocates capitalize on policy windows. In order to do so, they must continuously evolve their understanding of policy trends locally and nationally. With its focus on CCR policy, the Network offered a platform for members to compare and contrast how national narratives were actually showing up in their respective state legislatures.

POLICY ISSUE

Pathways

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High School Redesign

Admissions & Aid Simplification

Advising & Navigation

NATIONAL TRENDS

- Establishing or evolving statewide advising/coaching networks to promote college and career readiness
- Introducing career exploration in middle school
- Appropriating funds – and providing use guidelines – for AI tutoring platforms

IN THE GREAT LAKES

Ohio S 328 (2026)

Establish statewide career coaching framework; require schools to offer career exploration to 6th–8th graders; require 8th graders complete academic and career plans

Indiana S 365 (2025)

Establishes a career coaching grant fund to implement career navigation systems, provide career coaching services, or conduct employer site visits



KNOWLEDGE

A Look Under the Hood – Federal and State CCR Funding

A LOOK UNDER THE HOOD

Federal and State CCR Funding

No matter how much you deepen your knowledge of a specific policy challenge, funding almost always presents itself as a potential solution. **In tight budget cycles, however, advocating for increased funding often leads to dead-end conversations – particularly if you're unable to present creative, compelling offsets.**

In July of 2025, Education Strategy Group compiled a CCR Funding Scan across the Great Lakes region to help Network members compare and contrast the priorities reflected in each of their state's investments across dual enrollment, advising, and work-based learning. In addition to its role as a comparative tool, the funding scan also aimed to nurture improved fluency among advocates in key funding levers buried inside of ESSA, Perkins, and WIOA.

ILLINOIS		
FEDERAL		
ESSA Illinois Consolidated State Plan		
Overview: The vast majority (>95%) of ESSA funds are distributed to school districts based on local needs assessments. However, Title II and Title IV offer high-leverage opportunities for states to shape college and career readiness. Title II funds preparation and training for teachers and school leaders; Title IV primarily operationalizes two large block grant programs to promote well-rounded educational experiences guided by 21st century practices.		
Segment	State Allocation (FY2023)	State Details
Title II, Part A Supporting effective instruction	\$71.4M 2% YoY decrease	State activities funds allocated towards developing resources to increase educator capacity to support "transitional throughout the continuum of early childhood through college and career"
Title IV, Part A Student support and acad enrichment		
Title IV, Part F Education innovation and research		

STATE		
Program Name	State Allocation	Description
ICCB Dual Credit Grants	\$3.2M for FY2026 <i>*See appendix for a comparison of dual enrollment funding models across the Great Lakes</i>	ICCB distributes dual credit grants to select community colleges to reduce equity gaps and enhance dual credit programs at high schools with substantial percentages of underserved learners.
Taking Back the Trades!	\$5M for FY2025	ICCB distributes grants to community colleges to create in-school opportunities for high school students to engage in career exploration, credential attainment, and work-based learning.
State CTE Funding	\$153M for FY2026	Benefiting from increased investment and a new CTE funding formula , ISBE devises strategies for equitably expanding access to CTE programs.
Illinois Pathways	See description.	Statewide initiative designed to expand high-quality STEM and CTE pathways through partnerships with K-12 districts, colleges, and employers. Supported by state General Revenue Funds and CTE-dedicated appropriations, which saw a recent \$10 million increase. Illinois Pathways also benefits from ISAC's broader outreach, operations, and research budget of more than \$7 million annually.



TACTICS

Strategizing Stepwise – Advocacy Planning Moments

Strategizing Stepwise: Advocacy Planning Moments

*A good advocacy issue is **focused** enough, [and **localized** enough] to be linked to a clear solution and easily communicated to many people. (Miller & VeneKlasen)*

From January - May 2025, Education Strategy Group facilitated a sequence of guided exercises with each Network member, designed to produce actionable advocacy campaign strategies for the 2026 legislative session. Inspired by the framework devised by Valerie Miller and Lisa VeneKlasen in [A New Weave of Power, People, and Politics](#), coaching sessions were structured around four “planning moments:”

1

Problem Articulation

What is the **major problem** you wish to address through advocacy? What are the **root causes** of this problem? What kinds of **solutions** do you believe will be effective?

2

Defining Interim Outcomes

How do you **seek to influence** the policy environment? Public opinion? Implementation and practice? How will you **measure success** – in the short-term and the medium-term?

3

Stakeholder Mapping

Who **shares your position** on this advocacy issue? Who stands in **opposition**? Who **wields the power** to usher in the solutions that you’re advocating for? What are your **pathways to accessing** that power?

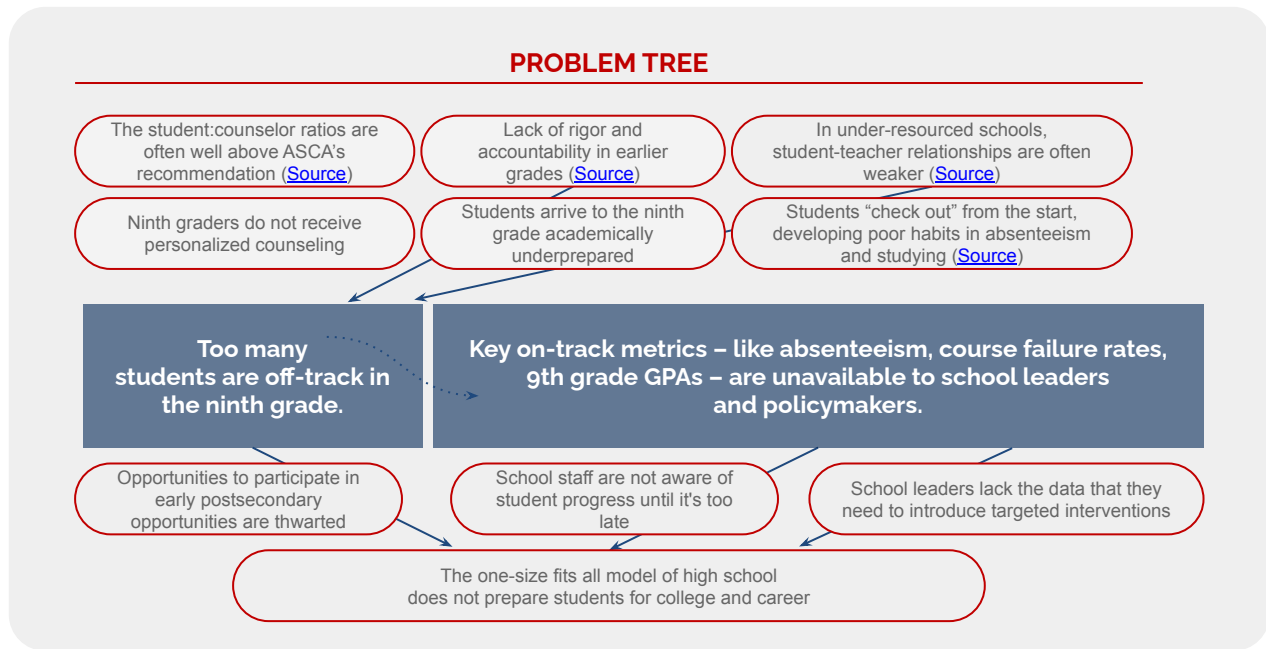
4

Implementing Tactics

How will you ensure that your advocacy messages reach your **target audiences**? How will you allocate **resources** to this campaign? What kinds of **risks** are you willing to take?

Strategizing Stepwise: Advocacy Planning Moments

Sample Template: Problem Articulation [De-Identified]



Problem Statement:

Statewide data systems do not provide key 9th grade on-track metrics, such as course failure rates or GPAs. In under-staffed, low-data environments, school leaders do not have the resources that they need to identify and intervene when students are off-track. As a result, many off-track students become progressively *more* off track over time.

Strategizing Stepwise: Advocacy Planning Moments

Sample Template: Stakeholder Mapping [De-Identified]

BROAD CATEGORY	SPECIFIC ORGANIZATION	ISSUE POV	RELATIVE POV	INTEREST	INFLUENCE	ALLY SCORE	OPPONENT SCORE
Government	State Agency		Very Pro	High	High	4	0
Government	State Board		Neutral	Medium	Low	0	0
Institution	State University		Pro	High	Medium	2	0
Local Education Agency	School District		Very opposed	Medium	High	0	2
Business	Chamber of Commerce		Very Pro	Medium	Medium	1	0
Union	Teachers Union		Opposed	Low	Low	0	1
Philanthropy	Family Foundation		Neutral	Low	High	0	0

The Right Tactics, the Right Targets, the Right Moment

The leg work required to move through the first three “planning moments” – problem identification, outcome articulation, stakeholder mapping – created rich, generative inputs for the fourth and final planning moment – constructing an implementation blueprint.

At an in-person convening in May 2025, Network members engaged in an extended peer-to-peer consulting session, collaboratively working to **match potential advocacy tactics to high priority stakeholders**. The resulting outputs became foundational artifacts for members as they took the summer to regroup and strategize. The next slide features one de-identified artifact from this exercise.

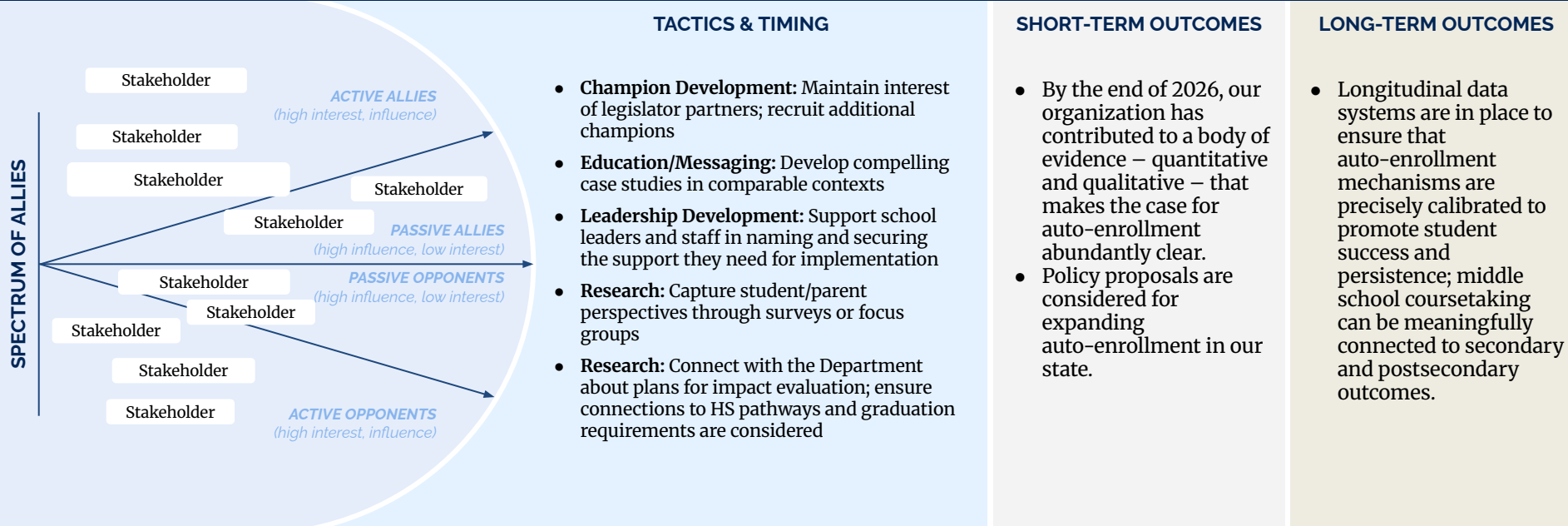
Though advocates possess hard-earned instincts in campaign execution, defining terms can be helpful in comparing and contrasting potential strategies. For this exercise, network members referred to an [Advocacy Tactics Library](#), produced by EdTrust-Tennessee, which became a group favorite going forward.



SAMPLE [DE-IDENTIFIED]

CURRENT STATE – THE PROBLEM

New legislation requires all public schools to introduce mechanisms for automatically enrolling middle school students in advanced math courses. Implementation and impact measurement will determine the future of auto-enrollment in the state.



ASPIRATIONAL STATE – THE SOLUTION

Auto-enrollment becomes a standard feature of coursetaking in our public schools – capitalizing on students' demonstrated strengths and propelling them into advanced coursework across a variety of academic subjects. As a result, an increasing proportion of high school seniors graduate with Honors.

Lessons in Power Mapping: Relying on Instincts



Power is Subjective. And slippery.

As Network members attempted to diagnose the relative power of various stakeholders in their ecosystem, they were constantly reckoning their own perceptions with the projected perceptions of others. Consider the following brain teasers:

- *An influential organization in the state has never publicly engaged on an emerging CCR issue. How might we go about determining their positionality?*
- *The teachers' union has historically wielded influence on Issue A, but recently ruffled feathers engaging on Issue B. Where might their overall influence net out next legislative cycle?*
- *The former Executive Director of a partner organization used to be one of the most influential players in CCR policy conversations. However, a new ED was appointed six months ago. How will this shift in leadership alter the perceived influence of the organization?*

Critically, **power mapping is an exercise in relativity and self awareness.** In assessing the relative power of their allies and opponents, Network members also carefully considered the strength of each of their organizational relationships. Ultimately, successful power maps direct strategic investments in specific relationships – and disinvestments from others.

Stand Illinois and EdSystems play to unique strengths

With a longstanding history of collaboration, the two organizations from Illinois bring complementary lenses to emerging policy issues, strategically leveraging each other's strengths. Stand Illinois brings advocacy muscle – promoting policies, educating legislators, and mobilizing stakeholders. EdSystems brings deep research capacity, technical credibility, and convening power with state agencies and practitioners.

Lessons in Power Mapping: Relying on Instincts



Relationship building is the hard-earned, iterative work backing any successful long-term strategy.

We've got to be patient, but we also need to be urgent; 25 years is too patient.
–Network Member, June 2026



In a policy environment frequently marked by inaction – or, worse, an environment that redirects advocacy efforts towards protection and defense – it can be difficult to articulate aspirational goals on a short time horizon. For many Network members, a bold, visionary “aspirational state” was easy to articulate; naming the stepping stones necessary to get there, however, was more challenging.

When concrete policy and funding wins are hard to come by, relationships become the bulk of the work. As Network members began to consider the direct connections between specific stakeholders and specific outcomes, expansive opportunities for collaborative work became increasingly clear. Yet, relational work requires psychological and emotional stamina. Advocates must strike a careful balance between creating urgency externally, while embracing patience internally.

Ohio's Career-Connected Learning Coalition

Ohio Excels convened a cross-sector coalition of organizations rarely found on the same side of the education debate: teachers union, business and agricultural groups, educators, and state agencies. Trust was built one relationship at a time, with tactical coordination from Ohio Excels. The payoff was a unified policy proposal and bipartisan legislation.

Lessons in Power Mapping: Relying on Instincts



There are moments to lead, and moments to follow.

There are issues where we're champions, and issues where we're coalition members. We're constantly re-evaluating our role. –Network Member, June 2026

Operating at the state level under the broad banner of education policy, coalition rosters can feel nearly identical from one issue to another. Yet, while names and faces may stay the same, roles and responsibilities shift depending on context. **Understanding these subterranean power shifts is key for organizations looking to continually elevate their own profile.**

For example, when trendy policy issues emerge (e.g. career-connected learning), advocates may recognize an opportunity to lead the assembly of a new coalition. Stepping into a leadership role as a convener and facilitator, it may also be tempting to take the lead on positionality and strategy. However, trust is often built upon compromise. Network members frequently swapped stories about carefully choosing moments to share credit, take credit, push hard, pull back, champion, and coalition.

The Michigan Education Guarantee

As an emerging thought leader in Michigan education policy, Launch Michigan champions the Michigan Education Guarantee – a new vision for the Michigan high school experience. However, Launch frequently shows up as a contributing thought partner to various other strategic conversations taking place in the state, e.g. the Dual Enrollment Task Force or the Higher Education Attainment Roundtable.

Lessons in Power Mapping: Relying on Instincts



You don't always need a new idea – just a new tactic.

Pivoting your plan shouldn't change your 'why' — you've got to make your 'why' their 'why.' –Network Member, June 2026

Across the region, Network members entered the 2026 legislative session encountering some version of the same challenge: election year caution, constrained state budgets, and a public sentiment against new state mandates. The question quickly shifted from what would we advocate for to where else can this idea live.

Power mapping made this answer more apparent. In tracing connections between stakeholders and outcomes, it became clear that the constraint was rarely the policy itself; it was the vehicle. Members redirected long-standing priorities into grant criteria, agency guidance, pilot programs, budget proposals, and district-level implementation. In doing so, they created an opportunity to build proof points, gain champions, and generate data that legislation will eventually need.

Generating Evidence: Auto-enrollment in Advanced Coursework

Amidst an election year, tight budget, and resistance against any new state mandates, EdAllies shifted its strategy from pushing for a universal auto-enrollment policy to organically building demand: Leveraging the [AP/IB/STEM grant](#), the team advocated for auto-enrollment to be a priority criterion for selection, and intentionally recruited districts to apply. Today, they are partnering with selected districts on data strategy, quality policy design, and case studies – building the proof points for a universal policy win down the road.

Lessons in Power Mapping: Relying on Instincts



Make the right choice the easy choice.

In some ways, the impact of a polarized political climate can be seen in the *kinds* of policies that have gained traction over the last few years. Consider the admissions redesign movement: Since Idaho introduced the first direct admissions program in 2015, [more than 25 states](#) have invested in solutions to simplify postsecondary admissions. At the middle and high school levels, academic acceleration policies are rapidly picking up speed; [almost a dozen states](#) have introduced auto-enrollment mechanisms since 2020. And within budget bills, investments in dual enrollment programs have remained steady despite widespread cuts.

Each of these examples demonstrates a key takeaway that one network member shared during a reflection exercise: *We just need to make the right choice the easy choice.* **Building evidence, bipartisan arguments, and diverse coalitions of supporters can turn a policy debate into a widespread win**, establishing fertile ground for future advocacy efforts to layer on top of.

Establishing No-Brainers: Advanced Coursework in Michigan

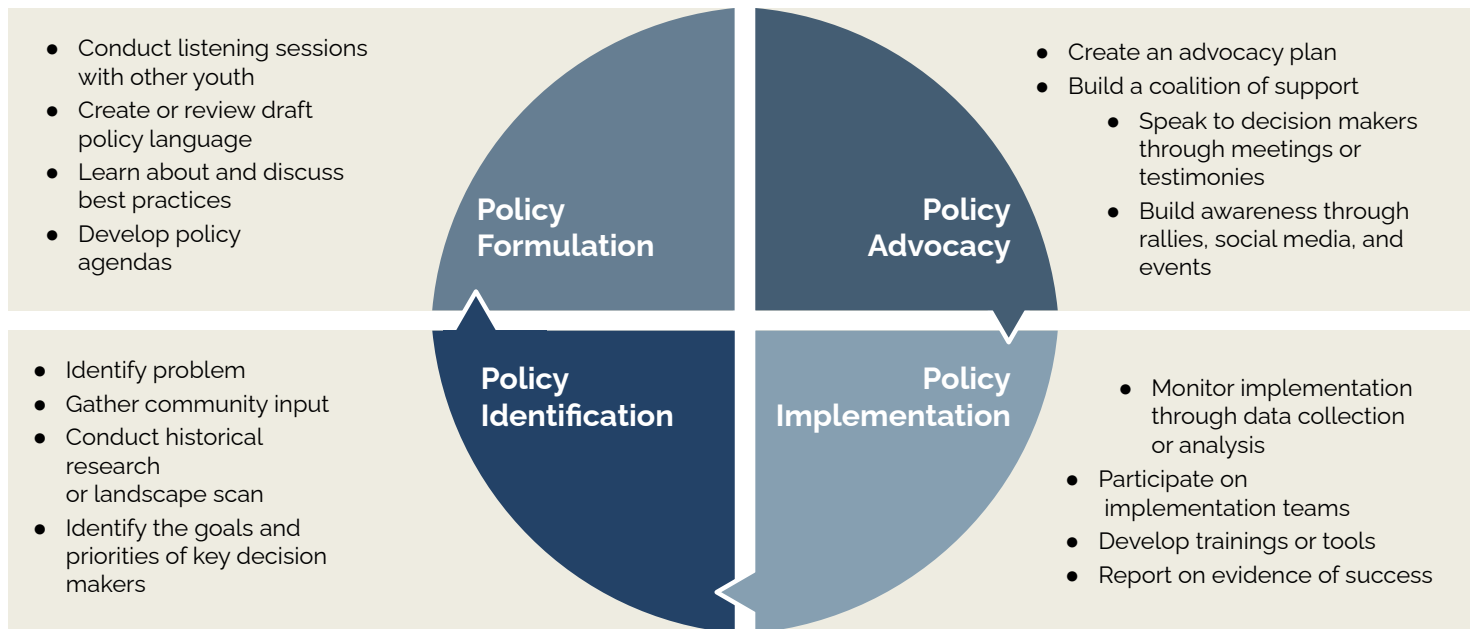
Michigan ranks among the [bottom five](#) states in the country for dual enrollment participation. And yet, advanced coursework is one of the most evidence-backed strategies for increasing postsecondary enrollment. In 2026, EdTrust-Midwest published a [data-driven report](#) identifying six proven strategies for expanding access to advanced coursework statewide.

TACTICS

"Keep Dreaming... Let Students Drive the Work."

The Spectrum of Student Voice

Across the network, student voice quickly emerged as an advocacy tactic worthy of close investigation. Considering their progress along the policymaking process, many network members approached the 2025-2026 legislative session as an opportunity to integrate students into their campaign activities.



Source: [*Holquist et al \(2025\)*](#)

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POLICY IDENTIFICATION

Community convenings have been a hallmark of Indiana Latino Institute's (ILI) impact for years. More recently, ILI began inviting students and families to contribute to qualitative research efforts. For example, the **Project Jumpstart** report, published in 2026, features insights from surveys and focus groups exploring access to advanced coursework in Indiana.

POLICY FORMULATION

Composed of ten high school students, The EdAllies **Community Action Team** seeks to define school safety from a student perspective. Students engage in independent research, draft policy recommendations, and contribute to public advocacy materials.

POLICY ADVOCACY

As Launch Michigan continues its long-term campaign for the Michigan Education Guarantee, students are climbing on board as advocates for a more engaging, connected high school experience. In May, student interns joined the team at the **Mackinac Policy Conference**.



RELATIONSHIPS

A Hypothesis Realized

A Hypothesis Realized

As the Network concludes its two-year tenure, the lessons and connections among members will endure. Below are the elements of the Network that helped the Joyce Foundation affirm its initial hypothesis on the value of regional collaboration.

A narrow issue aperture: A tight focus on a few discrete CCR policy issues gave members a shared vocabulary and made peers' wins and setbacks directly legible. Broader framing could have diluted the exchange.

A regional footprint: Similar legislative calendars, comparable political dynamics, and parallel policy trends meant one state's story helped to inspire and inform another's.

Coaching layered on convening: In-person gatherings built trust and connection; a regular coaching cadence converted that trust into strategy and momentum. Neither alone would have been sufficient.

A shared analytical exercise: The prolonged campaign planning sequence created a shared experience and forced a level of strategic candor that transformed network members from peers into co-consultants.

Consistency: The value of the Network was not any single convening but the accumulated sight line into each other's pivots. As one member put it: *"I was invested in their success and journeys."*



APPENDIX

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

Stand for Children – Illinois



Founded: 2012, Illinois

Staff Size: 3

Website: <https://stand.org/illinois/>

Mission Statement

Stand for Children Illinois' mission is to expand equitable access to public education opportunities for all children – especially those who are furthest from privilege and justice.

Core Initiatives or Services

- Advocate for high school success policies that ensure all students graduate college and career ready
- Educate legislators on the importance of aligned, intentional CCR policies
- Serve as the intersection between policy, politics, and implementation

Recent Highlight

- Stand's [CTE funding disbursement analysis](#) has driven statewide conversations about continually expanding access to high-quality CTE programming

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University



EdSystems

EDUCATION SYSTEMS CENTER at
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Founded: 2012, Chicago

Staff Size: 13

Website: <https://edsystemsniu.org/>

Mission Statement

EdSystems fosters collaborative partnerships to design, implement, and evaluate policies and practices that ensure successful transitions to and through postsecondary and career opportunities for students, with a particular emphasis on historically marginalized populations.

Core Initiatives or Services

Through our bi-directional approach, we collaborate at the state level to create ecosystem and policy change while partnering at the local level to foster organizational change. EdSystems' pillars of work ensure that policies are grounded in practice, practices are informed by evidence, and impact is measured and sustained across Illinois and beyond.

Recent Highlight

- Launched a [statewide initiative](#) to engage employers, intermediaries, and school staff in reimagining high school graduation requirements in Illinois

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

Indiana Latino Institute



Founded: 2011, Indianapolis

Staff Size: 11

Website: <https://indianalatinoinstitute.org/>

Core Initiatives or Services

- College Access Coaching
- College Success Coaching
- Workforce Development
- Leadership Development
- Advocacy

Mission Statement

Our mission is to advance Latino educational attainment and workforce preparedness statewide through advocacy, leadership development, and culturally responsive programming.

Recent Highlight

- [Project Jumpstart](#), a report released in Spring 2026, examines access to dual credit and Advanced Placement coursework across Indiana – and what it will take to expand opportunity statewide

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

Stand for Children – Indiana



Founded: 2011, Indianapolis

Staff Size: 6

Website: <https://stand.org/indiana/>

Mission Statement

Stand for Children is a unique catalyst for educational success and social progress, to create a brighter future for us all.

Core Initiatives or Services

- Parent education and leadership training
- Policy advocacy with a focus on: 9th grade on track; scaling schools that work; teacher workforce; school/district accountability; literacy

Recent Highlight

- Hosted a parent advocacy [workshop series](#), providing parents with the knowledge and know-how they need to make their voices heard in the policymaking process

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

EdTrust–Midwest



Founded: 2011, Michigan

Staff Size: 6

Website: <https://midwest.edtrust.org/>

Mission Statement

Our mission is to make Michigan a Top Ten education state for all groups of students, no matter their background, socio-economic status, or race.

Core Initiatives or Services

- Data Analysis and Modeling
- Communications & Media Relations Backbone
- MI-specific Policy Recommendations, Analysis & Technical Expertise for Policymakers and other Stakeholders
- Legislative and Lansing Backbone

Recent Highlight

- [Ready for Rigor](#), a report released in Spring 2026, considers access to AP, dual enrollment, and career-connected learning opportunities, while also examining the roles that school counseling, early literacy, and math readiness play in shaping students' long-term success.

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

Launch Michigan



Founded: 2018, Michigan

Staff Size: 4

Website: <https://www.launchmichigan.org/>

Mission Statement

Launch Michigan is a cross-partisan, nonprofit organization that includes education, business, labor and philanthropic leaders working together to reimagine Michigan's system of public education to prepare every child for success after high school.

Core Initiatives or Services

- Ensuring Michigan develops and adopts the Michigan Education Guarantee (that every Michigan student graduates with the future-ready skills and competencies to be successful in work and life)
- Adequate and equitable funding; aligned and effective governance

Recent Highlight

- The [Launch Michigan Podcast](#), which debuted in July 2026, captures an ongoing conversation about education reform, exploring the ideas, policies, and partnerships shaping the future of education.

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

EdAllies



Founded: 2016, Minneapolis

Staff Size: 9

Website: <https://edalliesmn.org/>

Core Initiatives or Services

Policy advocacy & community engagement in 3 goal areas: (1) Every Student Ready for College & Career; (2) Welcoming Schools for All; (3) Diverse & Effective Teachers

Mission Statement

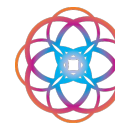
EdAllies partners with schools, families, and communities to ensure that every young Minnesotan has access to a rigorous and engaging education. We advance policies that put underserved students first, remove barriers facing successful schools and programs, and foster an inclusive conversation about what's possible for students.

Recent Highlight

- In July 2025, EdAllies released a comprehensive report examining statewide trends and opportunities across four key areas: Enrollment and demographics; academic achievement; student engagement and wellbeing; and teacher workforce. Access *The State of Education in Minnesota* [here](#).

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

Minnesota Education Equity Partnership



Minnesota
Education Equity
Partnership

Founded: 1988, Minneapolis-St. Paul

Staff Size: 5

Website: <https://www.mneep.org/>

Mission Statement

MnEEP transforms systems, structures, and public narratives to advance race equity and excellence in education. We envision a racially just society in which each student achieves their full potential.

Core Initiatives or Services

- Conducting original P-20 research
- Building Statewide Networks
- Convening People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) communities and educational systems leaders
- Policy Advocacy

Recent Highlight

- The [*Push Back / Push Forward Toolkit*](#) was released in 2025 amidst rapid change in education policy at the federal level. The toolkit equips Minnesota educators with legal insights, equity strategies, and student-centered narratives to resist federal threats, protect student rights, and lead schools where every learner can thrive.

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

Ohio Excels



Founded: 2018, Columbus

Staff Size: 5

Website: <https://www.ohioexcels.org/>

Mission Statement

To provide an informed business perspective to help improve and transform Ohio's education system so that it better prepares students to meet the demands of our evolving economy.

Core Initiatives or Services

- Policy research and advocacy that brings the business voice to the early childhood to workforce education system.
- Building coalitions of cross-sector partners on important issues.

Recent Highlight

- A suite of proposals developed by the Career-Connected Learning Coalition ultimately became Senate Bill 328, which recently [passed through the Ohio State Senate](#). Ohio Excels convenes the Career-Connected Learning Coalition to identify policy levers for improve career-connected learning and postsecondary planning throughout middle and high school.

NETWORK MEMBER PROFILE

Ohio Association of Community Colleges



Founded: 1993, Columbus

Staff Size: 7

Website: <https://ohiocommunitycolleges.org/>

Mission Statement

OACC advocates for Ohio's community colleges with strong policy leadership, empowers members to drive workforce alignment and student success, and convenes partners across education, workforce, and government to advance the vitality of Ohio's communities.

Core Initiatives or Services

- Comprehensive policy and advocacy agenda to support Ohio's 22 community colleges
- Success Center for OH Community Colleges
- Robust professional development and networking opportunities for college leaders, faculty and staff

Recent Highlight

- Lorain County Community College (LCCC) was [named a finalist](#) for the 2027 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence – the nation's most prestigious recognition for community colleges. LCCC is one of only 10 institutions nationwide to earn this distinction.