



# The Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act

## PaCE

The Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) framework guides communities on how to organize career exploration and development, college preparation and selection, & financial literacy requirements. The framework presents an understandable format of grade-level activities that can be shared with parents, teachers, and employers. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission is leading PaCE implementation with an array of training options for school leaders and counselors.

Enacted with bipartisan support in 2016, the **Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act** applies a student-centered and competency-based approach to support Illinois students in preparing for postsecondary education and future careers. The Act implements four aligned strategies that require coordinated efforts among school districts, postsecondary education institutions, employers, and other public and private organizations. These strategies were developed through an inclusive, multi-year process led by the P-20 Council's College and Career Readiness Committee to address key barriers to the successful transition of Illinois high school students into college and careers.



## College and Career Pathway Endorsements on High School Diplomas

The PWR Act establishes a new system for school districts to award College and Career Pathway Endorsements on high school diplomas, which validate the hard work of students preparing for life after high school. Endorsements reflect that a student has completed an individualized learning plan, engaged in a career-focused instructional sequence, participated in work-based learning, and demonstrated readiness for college-level reading and math. Public-private committees have developed technical and employability competencies aligned to employer expectations that will be incorporated into Endorsement programs. More than 100 high schools are piloting the Endorsements in the 19-20 school year, with continued scaling in future years.

## Transitional Math Instruction to Avoid Remediation

The PWR Act establishes a new statewide system for transitional math instruction that increases college readiness for high school seniors and reduces remedial education needs. Successful completion of transitional math instruction provides students with guaranteed placement into college-level math courses at all Illinois community colleges and accepting Illinois universities. Transitional math instruction emphasizes authentic learning experiences aligned with careers as well as a student's life and future coursework. All Illinois community colleges and hundreds of high schools are currently implementing transitional math, moving toward full statewide implementation in the next few years.

## Pilot of Competency-Based High School Graduation Requirements

In contrast to an education model focused on "seat time" (the amount of time a child spends in a class), a Competency Based Education (CBE) model allows students more flexibility to progress as they demonstrate mastery of concepts. The PWR Act establishes a pilot program for voluntary school district participation in moving from "seat time" graduation requirements to competency-based high school graduation requirements. The Act includes a streamlined waiver process for pilot districts of laws and regulations that may restrict the competency based system's implementation. Illinois currently has 45 school districts participating in the pilot, spanning the rural to urban continuum and including several regional collaborations.