

Academic Pathways	Present in the State		Special Efforts to Reach Underserved Students		State Support	
Advanced Placement (AP)	Yes	The WI AP Distance Learning Consortium provides AP courses through videoconferencing technology. Offered through the University of Wisconsin-Madison.	Yes	Statewide consortium targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income students • Rural students • Urban students. 	Yes	State has a grant to provide training to teachers who work with underserved students and to increase the overall number of AP teachers. State policy has guidelines so AP scores earn the same amount of credit at all WI colleges. Consortium funded by the U.S. Department of Education.
Alternative High Schools	Yes	WI school districts have developed alternative education programs. But the curriculum link between high school and college depends on the school district.	Yes	At-risk students	No	State statutes define an alternative education program (s. 115.28 (7) (e)) and state funding (155.366). In 1999, Wisconsin Act 9 created a state competitive grant program (WI Administrative Code §PI 44) to fund alternative education programs beginning with the 2000-01 school year.
Bridge Programs	Yes	Campus-based and differs by institution.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-achieving students • Special populations 	No	
Career Academies	Yes	No details known or available	DK	No details known or available	Yes	No details known or available
Career Centers	Yes	Ten regional career centers located across the state help youth in the areas they serve. Established in 1992 and through the Department of Corrections, some local institutions go to local juvenile detention centers and help students integrate back into high school or technical college by showing opportunities like the GED, a job, or higher education.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incarcerated youths 	Yes	State and federal funding

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Charter Schools	Yes	Many are administered at universities like the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Increasingly in popularity. Many charter schools are virtual schools.	DK	No details known or available	DK	No details known or available
College Level Exam Program (CLEP)	Yes	No details known or available	No		Yes	State policy and federal funding
Competency-Based Admissions	Yes	Curriculum project that will align high school freshmen level curriculum requirements with state high school competency requirements.	No		No	
<u>Distance Learning/ Virtual Schools</u>	Yes	Are extensive and carried out in many ways. Virtual schools are increasingly in popularity. Many charter schools are virtual schools.	No		Yes	State funding and university policy
Dual Credit/ Dual Enrollment	Yes	Called Youth Options, which are campus agreements system-wide with high schools, 2- and 4-year schools, and technical colleges.	No		Yes	State and local school district funding; Revised in 2004 so that school districts pay for students to enroll at no cost unless there are comparable courses at the high schools. State mandates that all districts participate.
Early or Middle College High Schools	No		No		No	
GED in College Settings	Yes	Coursework and testing at universities and technical colleges	Yes	No details known or available	Yes	State funding, legislation, and policy
International Baccalaureate (IB)	Yes	At 4 institutions	No		Yes	UW System Board of Regents policy and Federal funding

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PreK-16 Council	Yes	Comprised of heads of each WI educational system and other educational agencies taking on many initiatives that involve pathways.	No		Yes	State funding
Small Schools	Yes	To connect students and engage them in learning while feeling a sense of community. Focuses on continuity as a way of enhancing student retention. Aligns curricula and focuses on career and academic choices to prepare students for solely dual enrollment or postsecondary enrollment.	DK	No details known or available	DK	No details known or available
<u>Tech Prep</u>	Yes	In the form of School-to-Work, Youth Apprenticeship, Transcribed Credit, and 2+2+2 programs. There are Tech Prep consortia for all 426 school districts.	Yes	For non-college bound students who want to enter occupational and technical programs	Yes	State and federal policy, funding, and legislation
TRIO	Yes	At several university campuses	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-generation students • Low-income students • Racial and ethnic minority students 	Yes	Federal funding

Summary of academic pathways:

Wisconsin is very extensive in its use of academic pathways. Wisconsin has 16 academic pathways including career academies, charter schools, alternative high schools, and small schools that align the curricula with that of postsecondary education. Additionally, Wisconsin has TRIO programs, career centers, a PreK-16 Council, and competency-based admissions requirements. Although Wisconsin does not have formal early/middle college high schools, many students graduate from high school from a myriad pathways like dual credit (Youth Options Program) and tech prep. As a result, many students graduate from high school with associate degrees or certificates.

Although many academic pathways are not mandated nor legislated, Wisconsin state leaders are very concerned that all students have access to postsecondary education. Thus, Wisconsin has many unique pre-college programs that supplement existing academic pathways to help students go to college. For example, Wisconsin has the Higher Education Locator Program. It started as a 1-800 # general information hotline. Now, it is available online as well as via telephone, and it contains the highest amount and quality of information for students looking to enroll in the University of Wisconsin system (2- and 4-year colleges and universities). There is even an online application available to students on the website as well. Additionally, Wisconsin has career centers, which are drive-in sites located around the state to distribute career-based information to students and their families.

All pathways are viewed as important in Wisconsin because they are seen to truly help students gain access to postsecondary education. However, priorities shift when viewing them from the perspectives of either the state or the university system. From the state's perspective, the Youth Options Program is Wisconsin's highest priority. Youth apprenticeship through Tech Prep is another high priority. From the universities' perspective, precollege programs are the highest priority. Precollege programs intend to reach out and expose students to the college experience early so they can better prepare academically. Advanced placement (AP) is another high priority for universities because it challenges students more than any other way in high school while at the same time students earn college credit. Increasing access to AP courses is another high priority for the state and universities. The state superintendent's proposed 2005-07 education budget includes a provision to provide incentive grants to the 25 percent of public high schools that do not provide AP classes because of small school enrollments or lack of AP-qualified teachers. Distance learning is extensive in Wisconsin and increasingly in popularity and becoming more important. Wisconsin's goal is to continue providing distance learning, on-line delivery, and other support and outreach methods to make AP courses available to all students across the state.

Interesting or unique models identified by state officials:

- Tech Prep: Generac Power Systems, Inc. "Second Chance" Youth Apprenticeship Program
- Career Centers for incarcerated youth

Observations by state officials about special efforts to reach underserved students:

It is hard to know for which students special efforts are being made because many of the pathways are designed and implemented at the campus level. As it has been attracting higher proportions of the population base, Wisconsin has been very active in addressing the needs of the local racial and ethnic populations located in different areas of the state. For example, there is a large population of Hmong students in Madison and Wausau; a large population of African American students in Milwaukee and Madison; a large population of Native Americans throughout the state. Not only addressing the educational needs of those populations, Wisconsin focuses on retention to keep those students in the educational system. The Wisconsin technical college system has been very active in providing academic pathways, particularly for underserved students.

According to state leaders, academic pathways in Wisconsin are set up to be very inclusive. Across the board, they have made special efforts for all students. They continue to focus efforts on getting students prepared in technical areas through tech prep and enrolling students in areas that are considered non-traditional by gender standards. Wisconsin has done a fair amount of targeting minorities and special populations including students who have physical and mental disabilities. Wisconsin has even made special efforts for students in foster care. With regard to incarcerated youth, the state has made more special efforts to educate them with basic skills and help them earn a GED rather than systematic efforts to help them transition to college. Because incarcerated youth are often on technical college campuses, many technical education instructors have informally encouraged them to attend college and shown them career and educational opportunities. In addition, many technical colleges are reaching out to first-generation college students through recruitment, orientation, and retention.

In addition to special efforts for high school students through pre-college programs, Wisconsin schools reach out to middle schools students. They engage them in math and science early because their choices in middle school will influence their course selection in high school. Once students are in high school, they could find their interests and get involved in participate in different academic pathways like dual enrollment (Youth Options).



Observations by state officials about state support for pathways:

Academic pathways are priorities in Wisconsin as evidenced by the extensive state support. Over half of the academic pathways are supported by the state. Dual credit (Youth Options), tech prep, and the GED in a college setting are legislated by the state. Dual credit (Youth Options), tech prep, advanced placement (AP), distance learning, GED in a college settings, and career academies are supported by state or university policy. The aforementioned pathways plus TRIO, career centers, and PreK-16 Council are all supported by either state or federal funding.

Lessons learned by state officials:

- Address high school technical education teacher shortages by contracting with technical schools. This would allow high schools to offer more comprehensive programs.
• Encourage students to take their families to school one day. This would help change the negative image of technical education as well as provide support to students in completing their degrees.
• It is important to document and count students in order to effectively make special efforts for them.
• Make sure students are challenged in school's curriculum offerings because it is linked with college attendance and success.
• Reach out even earlier to young students and promote dual credit as a viable pathway. Most students do not know about the option.
• Schools can never do enough. Any exposure to higher education whether it is at the technical or university level as early in career as possible is a key to students' enrollment and success in postsecondary education.

Programs recommended by state officials:

Table with 5 columns: Pathways, Educational Institution, Contact person, E-mail, Phone. Rows include Tech Prep and Career Centers.

*State official's contact information:

Table with 5 columns: Name, Title, Agency, E-mail, Phone. Rows include Larry Rubin, Debbie Mahaffey, Aleta Murray, and Gabrielle Banick.

(Prepared by Melanie B. Rubin/ Updated December, 2004/ *Though contacted, state officials did not respond to requests to confirm the information presented in this profile.)