School Counselor
Career Exploration Action Guide - Part 1

Step 1: Establish a Team

Documents/To-Do Items	Guiding Questions & Tips
☐ Set up conversations with district/school leaders to engage them throughout the planning and implementation process ☐ Make a list of educators to collaborate with ☐ Establish a set planning time for initial implementation, as well as check-in opportunities throughout the year ☐ Consider ways to expand programming throughout the year.	Starting with conversations with leadership is crucial for garnering support, and possible funding, for a program. Reach out to different educators to see if there is interest. Think about including colleagues with varied backgrounds and experience in the planning process. Connect with other counselors in the school/district. • Observe other school's programs • Collaborate on ideas and resources Does the initial planning session provide enough time for collaboration? Should you plan multiple sessions? Be purposeful with meeting planning. From the start, set team norms and best practices.

Step 2: Set Clear, Measurable Goals

Documents/To-Do Items	Guiding Questions & Tips
☐ Write a short program overview ☐ Create year one goals ☐ Align goals with applicable standards ☐ Create long-term goals ☐ Review and analyze current data ☐ Develop an initial program measurement and assessment strategy	Questions to ask while planning: • What are the problems that need to be addressed by this program? • How will they be addressed? • What does success look like during the program's first year, for students, educators, and the school/district? • How will progress be measured? • How can goals be used to increase collaboration among team members? When analyzing data, ask: • Where are there gaps in current programming? • What opportunities exist? • What is missing from current data collection methods? Reference Chapter 4 for program measurement and assessment recommendations and resources.

Step 3: Develop a Program Plan

Documents/To-Do Items	Guiding Questions & Tips
☐ Develop a specific program plan ☐ Evaluate programs or products, or determine whether to create your own curriculum ☐ Create a program budget, and share with district/school leaders to determine a funding strategy ☐ Seek external funding opportunities ☐ Develop a profressional development plan and map out sessions throughout the year ☐ Schedule program events, like project showcases and field trips	Questions to ask while planning: • What kind of program do you want to create? • How will the program be implemented? • Who will be able to access the program? Be purposeful about which products and programs to adopt. Taking on too many at once can be overwhelming. Backwards plan while deciding what activities, such as project showcases, field trips, and student activities, to include to develop a more robust program. Build programming plans for larger groups of studenets, as well as pull-out groups or one-on-ones. Consider ways to engage district/school leaders and colleagues in events.

Step 4: Family and Community Engagement

Documents/To-Do Items	Guiding Questions & Tips
Part a: Family Engagement ☐ Develop a family communication plan ☐ Plan information sessions ☐ Build a library of resources for families to learn about and engage with the program ☐ Include families in program event planning **Part b: Community Engagement** ☐ Create a list of personal/professional connections within the community ☐ Create a community outreach plan ☐ Map how to engage partners in the planning ☐ Include community in progam event plans ☐ Evaluate tools and platforms that utilize industry connections ☐ Create a plan for a mentorship program	Provide translations of all communications and include students in family events. Encourage students to share projects at student-led conferences. Consider creating opportunities for families to learn about career exploration themselves, and to take advantage of the program. Equip familiies with lists of external opportuntiies for students to explore their interests. Consider having a point person that will prioritize engaging community partners. They should seek partners from diverse backgrounds and fields. Build projects around communities issues to make real-world connections for students. Ways to engage partners include: • Mentorships • Work-based learning opportunities • Project showcases • Contests • Career Days • Professional interviews • Community spotlights