



# BLUEPRINT for Maryland's FUTURE

**Prepared  
Students**

**Structured  
Pathways**

**Meaningful  
Programs**

**Post-Secondary  
Success**

## FOCUSING ON COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS FOR ALL

### Understanding the CCR Standards and Pathways

The aim of the Blueprint is for every student—no matter their race, gender, their parents' economic status, or their zip code—to graduate from high school with the skills and training for immediate post-graduation employment or access to a successful post-secondary experience. That path may lead directly to a well-paying job, a community college for advanced training or college courses, or a four-year college for a bachelor's degree.

These opportunities become available through the new college and career readiness (CCR) standards and pathways, which include an internationally benchmarked curriculum by which most students can achieve CCR by the end of 10th grade, allowing them to choose a pathway to graduation. CCR includes the important expansion of career and technical education (CTE), or a combination of CTE and college-bound academics, that provides more opportunities to tap into every student's unique skills, interests, and aspirations.

If a student does not meet the CCR standard in 10th grade by achieving a score of 4 or 5 in the math and English portions of the CCR assessments (assumed to be the MCAP), the law requires that the student receive an individualized plan designed to meet the standard as soon as possible and no later than 12th grade. This focused intervention ensures that every student has access to the programs and supports they need to realize their potential. Students who do not meet the standard can still graduate but without access to the post-CCR pathways.

The CCR pathways are International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, Cambridge Diploma, early college, or CTE programs that lead to college, immediate employment, industry-recognized credentials, apprenticeships, or further technical education at a community college or trade school. Students choose a pathway upon achieving college and career readiness and follow it through to their graduation.

Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, all students who meet the CCR standard must have access (at no cost, including fees) beginning in 11th grade to the post-CCR pathways, including: a competitive entry college preparatory program, chosen by the local board; a program that allows a student, through an early college program or dual enrollment at a student's high school and an institution of higher education, to earn an associate's degree or at least 60 credits; and CTE programs that are recommended by the CTE Skills Standards Advisory Committee and approved by the CTE Committee, including apprenticeships and dual enrollment in credit or eligible noncredit certificate programs.

Learn more about the Blueprint for Maryland's Future at [marylandeducators.org/Blueprint](https://marylandeducators.org/Blueprint).



## An Earlier Start for Success

When the Kirwan Commission, the group of policymakers who developed the Blueprint, presented recommendations to the legislature, it focused on five policy areas: early childhood education, high-quality and diverse teachers and leaders, college and career readiness, more resources and access for all students, and an accountability structure that ensures implementation that is true to the intent of the Blueprint.

Beginning with expanded pre-k and family supports, especially in Black, Brown, and rural communities, each of the five areas opens more doors for students and families and ultimately align with one another to create a school system that honors students and educators by providing access, support, and funding. These culminate in the college and career readiness pathways leading to post-secondary student success.

To ensure that all students are challenged and ready to take advantage of the pathways, the CCR standard requires middle and high schools to encourage students to enroll in the next most rigorous course available after a student has demonstrated readiness in a subject matter and make available accelerated paths to CCR before the end of 10th grade.

To support students in their choice of CCR pathway, the Blueprint requires each board of education to work collaboratively with the local workforce development board, community college, and where possible, the American Job Center to create the Career Counseling Program for middle and high school students. These programs must provide individualized counseling to help each student choose one or more post-CCR pathways.

## The Blueprint CCR Timeline

The Blueprint's aim is to provide structured pathways for students in 11th and 12th grade to both college level courses and CTE that leads to credentialing. To do this, beginning in the 2021–2022 school year, local school systems are required to use a 9th grade “tracker system” to monitor individual student progress toward CCR readiness by the end of 10th grade. In the 2022–2023 school year, systems must have in place the interventions to support struggling students' successful readiness for their chosen pathway by providing “appropriate, individualized instruction and supports needed to get the student back on track for college and career readiness.”