

Nebraska CAPS 'Why'

Aligning students to passion and raising awareness of strengths. Visit <http://ncaps.yourcapsnetwork.org/> for more information.

Nebraska CAPS Core Principles

1. **Profession-based Learning** – Instructors develop real-world, project-based learning strategies through collaborations with business and community partners. These interactions enhance the learning experience, preparing students for college and career.
2. **Professional Skills Development** – Unique Experiences allow students to cultivate transformative professional skills such as understanding expectations, time management, and other essential business values. These skills are critical to providing students a competitive advantage in their post-secondary education and professional careers.
3. **Self-Discovery and Exploration** – Students realize their strengths and passions by exploring and experiencing potential professions. This allows them to make informed decisions about their future, while learning to exhibit leadership.
4. **Entrepreneurial Mindset** – Instructors create an environment where creative thinking and problem solving is encouraged. An innovative culture is key to fostering entrepreneurial learning and design thinking.
5. **Responsiveness** – CAPS supports high-skill, high-demand careers through ongoing innovation in curriculum development, programs and services based on local business and community needs.

Nebraska CAPS Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

The purpose of Nebraska CAPS is to assist each student to find their passion and locate awareness of their strengths. Every student takes an interest profile survey developed by the United States Department of Labor. Students then evaluate the results and choose a career that interests them.

Nebraska CAPS locates a business/industry partner to mentor the student. The purpose of the mentorship is for the mentor to assist the student to identify and develop skills and abilities important to their passion and career interest. Here is how it works.

The student has a Career Choice report that includes relevant skills, abilities, work activities, job details, work context, tools, technology, and education recommended by the US Department of Labor for the student's career choice. The student uploads this report into a computer program and AP called Basecamp.

Mentors and students will use Basecamp to together establish goals based on the Career Choice Report and the opinions of their mentor.

Mentors will review the student skills, abilities, work activities, detailed work activities, and tasks to establish a work project the student will complete. It is recommended to begin with a driving question. This statement should present a challenging problem or question at the heart of the project. The driving question should be engaging for students, open-ended, and aligned to goals.

A project should be designed to last for one semester or about four months. Consideration may be given to providing students a small project or series of mini projects with defined problems before moving into a very complex problem. Complex projects should be open-ended having many correct answers to maximize student engagement and build student confidence with the unknown.

Projects could be designed to solve real problems such as, 'How can entrepreneurs develop a business plan to attract investors?' 'How could we determine the validity of statistical data on climate change?' Projects could meet a design challenge such as, 'How can we design an appropriate Vietnam War Memorial?' Projects could explore an abstract question where, 'Students evaluate various claims about consumer products and create a Consumer Guide Website.' A Project could conduct an investigation like, 'What are the buying habits of consumers in the meat industry, how have they changed, and how would you predict them to change?' Finally, a project could take a position on an issue such as: 'Are GMO foods harmful or beneficial?' (Larmer, Mergendoller, and Boss).

Mentors will determine what industry-based tools and technology the student needs to learn or use to be successful in reaching project goals. The mentor will also determine where the student will spend time working on the project. A schedule can be developed in Basecamp's Schedule section. The Schedule section can be used for students and mentors to set deadlines and complete a timeline of activities.

The school district can transport students to the mentor's work place on Fridays. It is also possible for juniors and seniors to visit work sites on Mondays and Wednesdays. Getting students into the 'wild or work' as soon as possible gains relevance through exploration, collaboration, and authentic workplaces. Students will also be working on the project at school throughout the week.

The student is responsible for reporting progress on goals every day through Basecamp's Automatic Check-in and To Do List. The student will be required to post daily visualizations in logs on the To Do List. These visualizations will include how the student is planning to meet goals and what strategies they plan to use to work through obstacles they are encountering.

Students will also daily reflect about progress made during practice activities and advocate for assistance or new strategies from their mentor. The mentor can provide feedback to the student through Basecamp's Campfire Section. It is valuable when Mentor's can provide ongoing feedback about student work to develop a cycle of progress. From time to time, the student may post a video of their performance for the mentor to evaluate. Finally, students will keep a video storyboard along with a reflective journal inside the To Do List.

Each student will be reviewing and conducting research throughout their project. Research questions will be developed about any of the following: tools, technology, skills, abilities, work activities, detailed work activities, tasks or other. The mentor can guide student development of research questions and methods to be used. Junior and Senior students will rely heavily on their college instructors or third party researcher to conduct and carry out research. Freshman and Sophomore students will be supported by high teachers and advisors.

Students and mentors can participate in discussions through Basecamp with teachers and school administrators to determine what courses Nebraska CAPS offers, what the content of the courses will be, and what tools and technology will be used. All learning experiences will be completely centered-around student interests and needs pertinent to developing career-based skills and abilities.

At the end of each semester, every student will present a public project. The mentor will be invited along with parents, alumni, teachers, third party researchers, and a demonstration panel of volunteers to provide input back to the student. During this highly anticipated, high-pressure situation we expect students to dig deep and showcase their passions, strengths, and describe their growth on skill and ability development through work activities selected during the project. Public projects can be any of the following: evening showcase, shark tank, demo night, launch party, pre-screening event, debate, mock trial, etc.

College Courses and Intro Courses for 9th and 10th grade

College courses will be held in Career Pathways on Monday and Wednesday for 75 minutes each session. College courses will last seventeen weeks or one semester. Students may take as many college courses as they like throughout the Career Pathway days. There will be 75-minute blocks on Monday and Wednesdays. The college course times will begin as follows:

- Section #1 – 8:20 – 9:20 Band & Music
- Section #2 – 9:20 – 10:35
- Section #3 – 10:35 – 11:50
- Section #4 – 11:50 – 1:05
- Section #5 – 1:05 – 2:30
- Section #6 – 2:30 – 3:38

Scheduling for Career Courses

Students will complete an interest profile and then select a career, a Business/Industry Mentor, and project. The Business/Industry Mentor and student will work together to identify goals during the project centered around skills, abilities, work activities, and work details.

Business/Industry Partners will guide students in choosing courses that scaffold knowledge to support the student to build skills and abilities to effectively carry out detailed work activities. Courses will support the use of industry-based tools and technology recommended by the Business/Industry Mentor.

Career Pathway Course Design

Student goals will be developed around skills, abilities, work activities, tasks, and work details. Then students, their business partner/industry mentor, and career pathway teachers will have an open dialogue on Basecamp and in person (optional for business partners) to shape Career Pathway Courses.

Career pathway teachers will post course ideas on NCAPS Template Basecamp in Campfire. Course ideas will be based on prior courses taught and evaluation of goals students set with their Business/Industry Mentor. Students and Industry Mentors will provide input into courses and how they can be adjusted to meet the development of student goals based on the skills and abilities they have agreed upon with their mentor. Courses will also consider tools, technology, skills, abilities, and work activities necessary for students to become contributors in their passion area.

Career pathway courses may be team taught, or taught individually. Business/Industry Mentors can assist with course delivery. Courses may vary in time and length based on the needs of students.

Career Pathways

Students must choose a Career Pathway as a home base in any of the following Career Pathways: Advanced Manufacturing, Bioscience, Agriculture, and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communication; Business Management and Administration; Education, Training, and Human Services; Engineering and Informational Technology; Health Sciences; Government; Law, Public Safety, and Security; and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics. The lead teacher in this Career Pathway will be the student's focus teacher.

Students will choose a Business/Industry Mentor and this partner will select a project. Junior and Senior students will start in the pathway on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Once a pathway is established, students will be strongly encouraged to crossover and gain experiences from other

Career Pathways based on goals they set with their Business/Industry Mentor and focus teacher. They will be able to work at job sites every Friday and sometimes on Monday and Wednesdays.

Freshman and Sophomore students will start in a Career Pathway on Tuesday and Thursdays. Once a Pathway is established, students will be strongly encouraged to crossover and gain experiences from other Career Pathways based on goals they set with their Business/Industry Mentor and focus teacher. They will be able to work at job sites every other Friday.

Scheduling for Core Courses

All Sandy Creek core classes will take place in blocks beginning in January 2017. Blocks will be 84 minutes. All core classes will be linked to each student's career pathway choice. Core classes will incorporate work-based projects, work-based simulations, and blended learning opportunities. Freshman and sophomore core courses will be on Mondays, Wednesdays, and every other Friday. Junior and senior core courses will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Research-based Models incorporated into NCAPS

NCAPS will be incorporating Anders Ericsson's model of Deliberate practice as part of the student's work-based and profession-based learning experience. Students will be paired with superior performers who have high levels of expertise in a student's career area. These experts will identify a task analysis to assist the student to reach superior performance or expert status.

Students participating in work-based projects and internships will be incorporating Susanne Lajoie's Cognitive Apprenticeship model. Through the Cognitive Apprenticeship model, students will learn to develop highly structured knowledge helping the students to perceive meaningful patterns in their memory and thinking. Students will be able to self-assess what they know or don't know. They will be able to monitor their performance and thinking and learn how to use mental models to choose task strategies. Students will be directed to use the Theory of Change to assist develop experiences that will transform them into adaptive experts who are flexible, adaptive, and creative.