

## *Quick Reference: Career Clusters Critical Components & Benchmarks for LOCAL/SCHOOL Implementation*

*On the LOCAL level, in order to successfully implement the Career Clusters framework and meet the Career Cluster goals for learners, the following critical components need to be met.*

<b>Critical Components</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
1. Administrative Support	The college or school administrators and school board members support the concept of the career emphasis/focus (cluster) process and components. They provide scheduled chunks of time for the cluster team (administration, teaching faculty, industry and education partners, and career counseling staff) to meet together, offer professional development opportunities for the cluster team, and encourage learner participation and parent and community support.
2. Shared Planning	The entire Cluster Curriculum Team has regularly scheduled time for program planning and curriculum design. They have the equivalent of at least one full day each month to work together and compare learner progress and curriculum effectiveness.
3. Career Development	Each learner in the Career Cluster has a scheduled meeting with a career counselor, teacher advisor, or faculty advisor on at least two occasions each school year to develop and revise as necessary an individual career education plan (personal career plan of study). Parents are included in the career planning sessions. Learners base their career plans on a number of career awareness and exploration experiences.
4. Professional Development	The entire Cluster Team jointly participates in professional development activities that help build their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the selected Career Cluster and the application to teaching methodology.
5. Standards-Based Curriculum	Curriculum is designed to include both the Career Cluster Foundation and Pathway Knowledge and Skills, industry standards, and appropriate academic standards. Curriculum enhances and reinforces academic content and, as a result, improves both Career Cluster and academic achievement.
6. Parent and Community Support	Parents and/or guardians/mentors are informed of the program content, participate in the career decision-making process, and support the program in various settings. Community groups offer program support through sponsorships and marketing. They assist with identifying workplace learning sites and building industry partnerships.
7. Education Partnerships	Elementary school, middle school, high school, technical and/or community college, university, and workforce center faculty are included in the Career Cluster team, as appropriate, to assure a learning continuum. Partnerships are formalized -interdisciplinary and sequential --across levels of education.
8. Business and Industry Partnerships	Partners are fully engaged as Cluster Team members. They are representative of the entire Career Cluster. The representatives participate in planning and development as well as assist in classroom and workplace implementation and support.

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9. Multi-Measure Assessment	Assessment includes both cumulative (projects, research papers, portfolios, workplace learning or community service) and on-demand (multiple choice, presentation, demonstration, scenario response) measures and meets the criteria for several disciplines.
10. Interdisciplinary Teams	The Cluster Teams work collaboratively to offer the curriculum in an interdisciplinary approach. The content is typically designed around a common theme or project with a culminating activity, product, or service as a result of the instruction.
11. Flexible Schedules	School schedules are flexible and allow for interdisciplinary team managed blocks of time as needed for projects, labs, and other action-based activities.
12. Integrated Curriculum	The curriculum is developed and taught by the Cluster Team. The content is multidisciplinary and based on academic and Career Clusters Foundation Knowledge and Skills and taught within the context of the selected Career Cluster industry. Career Cluster content is strengthened by the integration of academic concepts.
13. Creative and Innovative Teaching Strategies	Team-building, critical-thinking, and problem-solving activities are incorporated into the program. All content is reinforced through application and practice.
14. Workplace Learning	All learners participate in workplace learning experiences consistent with their career goals. The workplace learning is directly related to and consistent with the classroom instruction.
15. Student-Centered Learning	Learners are involved in the design and development of their coursework based on their interests, career goals and consistency with the standard(s) to be met.