

# WHAT ARE CREATIVE K-12 SCHOOLS UP TO? AUGUST 2023

The Canopy project shares information about schools engaged in innovation to advance equity and student-centered learning. Every year, schools nominated to the project share the practices they're implementing in a survey. With this information, we used a statistical process to cluster practices that tend to show up in schools' data together—in other words, a bottom-up approach that helps reveal themes among schools' practices. We found four distinct themes.

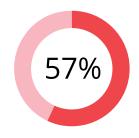
## THEME 2: POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS AND THE WORLD OUTSIDE SCHOOL



In schools implementing these kinds of practices, students participate in career-related learning like internships or apprenticeships, as well as career exploration. They can begin to earn college credit in high school through early-college models, and can receive credit for learning experiences outside traditional classrooms, such as in internships. Some of their learning

experiences leverage community and business partnerships developed by the school, including meaningful community service learning opportunities and chances to earn industry credentials. Their schools may also offer fully virtual pathways for students who prefer online learning, or "enriched virtual" blended learning in which students complete the majority of coursework online, but attend school for some required face-to-face learning sessions.

#### PERCENTAGE OF 251 CANOPY SCHOOLS THAT REPORTED KEY PRACTICES IN THIS THEME



Career preparation and work-based learning



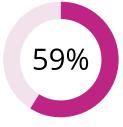
Students earn industry credentials



Assessments for career readiness



Community and business partnerships



Extended learning opportunities

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### **EXAMPLES IN ACTION: POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS AND THE WORLD OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

Nashville Big Picture High School, in Nashville, Tennessee, is a small public school designed for an emphasis on authentic, real-world learning. The school leader reported that students spend 10 hours per week with mentors in internships in the local community, and that these relationships "often last well beyond the high school years." Internships function as a core component of students' experience in the school, where learning that happens outside the classroom contributes to students' progress toward graduation.

Dekalb Brilliance Academy, in Decatur, Georgia, is a charter school designed around entrepreneurial real-world projects for early elementary students. The school hosts "celebrations of learning" every semester where teams of students present their work to families and professional community leaders in the audience. School leaders and parents describe these events as celebrations that "foster students' pride in their work, give them opportunities to practice their leadership voice, and reinforce the importance of service to improve our communities."



Nashville Big Picture High School student Dayvon picks up a new laptop.



A Dekalb Brilliance Academy student and teacher build confidence and celebrate counting skills.

At Cañon City High School, a public high school in Cañon City, Colorado, the school also has one of the only mandated internship programs for graduation so "100% of students gain work-based experience in their chosen career field" through the school. The core program is "under the umbrella of a career pathways curriculum" driven by the idea of innovating for "equity on behalf of every student". Principal Bill Summers pointed to "individualized career-focused curriculum where every student can choose from a catalog of courses. More than 50% of [the courses] are college credit-bearing. Students can achieve many different industry standard certifications while at high school so that they can gain...a higher education or employment certification, if that's what they choose to do."

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## **LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS THEME**

About Work-Based Learning

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Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeships



(New America)

<u>Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and</u>
Summer Learning for Student Success





