



Design Your Path to Your Promise



School Counselor User Guide

Kalamazoo Labor Market Navigator: Promising Progressive
Career Pathways from School to Careers

Advising to Action: The School Counselor's Role in College & Career Success

Kalamazoo Public Schools Mission: To nurture the dreams of all students and empower all students to contribute to a better world.

Empowering School Counselors to Shape Futures Beyond Graduation

From sparking curiosity to guiding choices, school counselors play a vital role in shaping students' in and out-of-school experiences, and post-high school pathways.

- **Champion student exploration and self-discovery** by helping learners uncover their strengths, interests, and passions as they connect classroom learning to real-world careers.
- **Ignite curiosity about the future** through meaningful exposure to a wide array of postsecondary pathways—including college, apprenticeships, military, credentials and full-time careers.
- **Guided transitions with purpose** by partnering with students to thoughtfully plan their passage from secondary school into life beyond, equipping them with the mindset and skills to thrive.
- **Build inclusive access for every learner** by recognizing the uniqueness of each student and using culturally responsive practices to create equitable opportunities.
- **Cultivate lifelong readiness** by fostering career-readiness skills—such as adaptability, self-management, and critical thinking—that serve students across stages of life and work.
- **Lead with collaboration and vision** by engaging families, educators, and community partners to establish a college- and career-ready culture that celebrates possibility and supports every student's goals.
- **Connect** students' interests, personality, and academics to in- and out-of-school experiences, such as dual enrollment, early middle college, Career and Technical Education, and apprenticeships to further help students build in-demand skills for today and tomorrow's workplace.
- **Promote dual enrollment opportunities** that give students early access to college success, enabling them to earn college credits in high school and accelerate degree attainment.

Visit the [American School Counselor Association](#) to learn more about how school counselors support students in college and career planning.

Students' Futures Begin Here!

What is the Kalamazoo Promise?

The Kalamazoo Promise is a unique and powerful scholarship for Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) students that covers up to 100% of the cost of college degrees and credentials at approved training centers, as well as public and private universities and colleges in Michigan. Learn more about [The Kalamazoo Promise](#).

How can students use the Labor Market Navigator (LMN) for Kalamazoo Public Schools to Maximize the Kalamazoo Promise?

This step-by-step guide will help students use the Kalamazoo LMN to navigate their career journey with clarity and confidence, explore post-secondary options, and identify funding opportunities to support their Michigan Educational Development Plan (EDP) and career goals.

Benefit	What It Means for Counselors, Students and Families
Clarity	There is no need for students to guess which career to choose! They will discover which jobs are growing, the preparation needed, potential wages, and the credentials required or degrees employers are seeking.
Goal-Focused Education	Students can select a CTE or other program of study that leads to strong, in-demand careers in the Kalamazoo region.
Control	Students and families become drivers of educational choices. They may use the data to choose courses, internships, apprenticeships, and certifications/degrees that align with their goals.
Smarter Course Selection	When a career path requires a specific certification or degree (e.g., programs offered at Kalamazoo Valley Community College), Promise funds can support specific training, often providing a faster and more affordable route to a high-quality job than a four-year degree.
Confidence	Students and families feel secure in their post-high school decisions, whether they choose to attend college, technical school, or start their post-high school career. Students can also do both!
Efficient Time Management	Since The Kalamazoo Promise funds are available for ten years after graduation, the maps help students plan their educational career path from start to finish and guide them in adjusting and progressing along the way.
Connection to the Kalamazoo Promise	Students will maximize the benefits of The Kalamazoo Promise by making smart, informed decisions about progressive course pathways and relevant experiences in planning your future career.

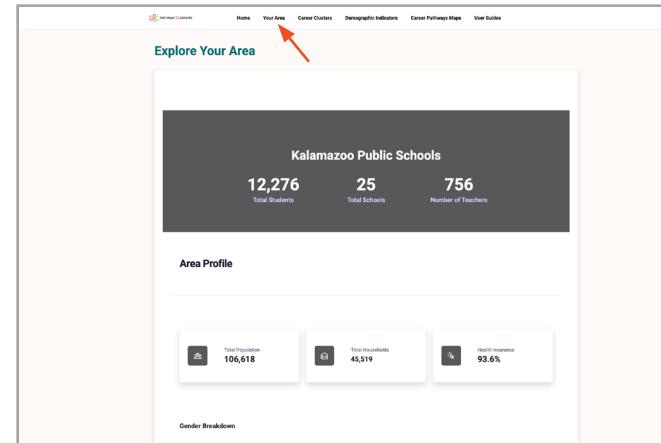
What is the Kalamazoo Labor Market Navigator?

The Kalamazoo Labor Market Navigator (LMN) is an online resource designed just for students in the Kalamazoo Public Schools system. The LMN provides regional information on projected job growth for high-value careers, median wages, and required credentials in Kalamazoo County, presented in clear, easy-to-understand data dashboards and pathway maps supporting students' aspirations, goals, and post-secondary dreams.

Think of the Kalamazoo LMN as your personal, data-driven GPS for the world of work.

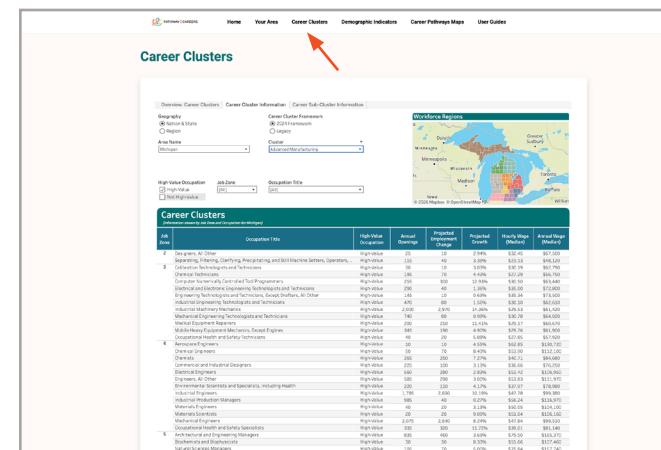
Your Area:

The Kalamazoo LMN Your Area tab provides students with a clear picture of their local workforce region through easy-to-understand census data. It highlights key information such as population data, median household income, and average commuting distance for workers in the area. This snapshot helps students understand the community they live in, the economic landscape around them, and the factors that shape local career opportunities.



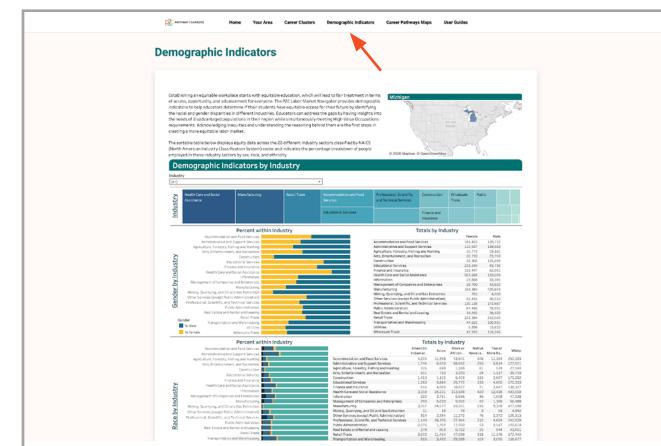
Career Clusters:

The *Career Clusters tab* helps students explore different career areas by grouping jobs into fourteen career clusters and more specific sub-clusters. This organization allows students to browse career opportunities that match their interests, skills, and future goals. By exploring sub-clusters, students can see how career clusters break down into specialized roles, helping them understand which education or training leads to their ideal career.



Demographic Indicators:

The *Demographic Indicators* tab provides a clear view of the local workforce, displaying data on gender balance, diversity, and other population trends. This information highlights where opportunities exist, including non-traditional but high-demand pathways, such as females entering fields like electrical engineering. By understanding these trends, students can identify careers where their strengths and perspectives are needed and valued.



Career Pathways Maps:

The *Career Pathways Maps* tab allows students to connect middle and high school course selection, Career and Technical Education (CTE), Early Middle College, Dual Enrollment, and Education for the Arts (EFA), and apprenticeships to local careers and future educational degree or certification pathways. The maps illustrate which jobs are in demand in the region, what education or credentials are needed, and median wages. The maps make it easy for students to plan smart course schedules, explore career options early, and take steps now that align with future goals.

Learn more about [The Kalamazoo Labor Market Navigator](#).

Preparation Starts Now

Why is early career preparation critical?

Preparing early opens doors to valuable skills and connections that help students confidently enter the world of work. Early preparation supports:

- **Closing the Skills Gap:** Many rewarding careers, such as information technology and construction, require specialized technical expertise rather than a four-year degree. The earlier students identify these pathways, the sooner they can prepare by choosing the right CTE program of study, certifications, or work-based learning experiences.
- **Maximizing Students' Time:** High school is the perfect time to explore career fields risk-free through job shadowing, work-based learning experiences, summer jobs, electives, clubs, and extracurriculars. The LMN and Kalamazoo Promising Progressive Career Pathways Maps help you prioritize which experiences will matter most on a resume. For example, if a student in an HVAC program of study has a goal of working in the industry, applying for an apprenticeship with a local HVAC company can lead students directly into the workforce after the apprenticeship is completed.
- **Securing Students' Financial Future:** Getting an early start on a career allows students to gain experience and develop workplace skills sooner, helping them reach financial independence more quickly. By understanding the typical entry-level and median wages in their chosen fields, students can set clear, achievable salary and lifestyle goals, plan expenses, and make informed decisions about education, training, and career opportunities.



Local Workforce Data: Understanding the Kalamazoo Promising Progressive Career Pathways Maps

Why Use Local Workforce Data?

Because employers in your students' community need their talent and skills!

Bottom Line: Using local workforce data ensures career decisions are based on real, tangible opportunities available in the Kalamazoo area.

What are the Kalamazoo Promising Progressive Career Pathways Maps?

The Kalamazoo Promising Progressive Career Pathway Maps help students connect their high school coursework to local, in-demand careers and the education needed to pursue them. These maps identify available careers in the Kalamazoo region, their median wages, and the required education level, allowing students to plan their studies, seek in- and out-of-school experiences, find resources, and explore work-based learning opportunities.

Every map is built around three key elements:

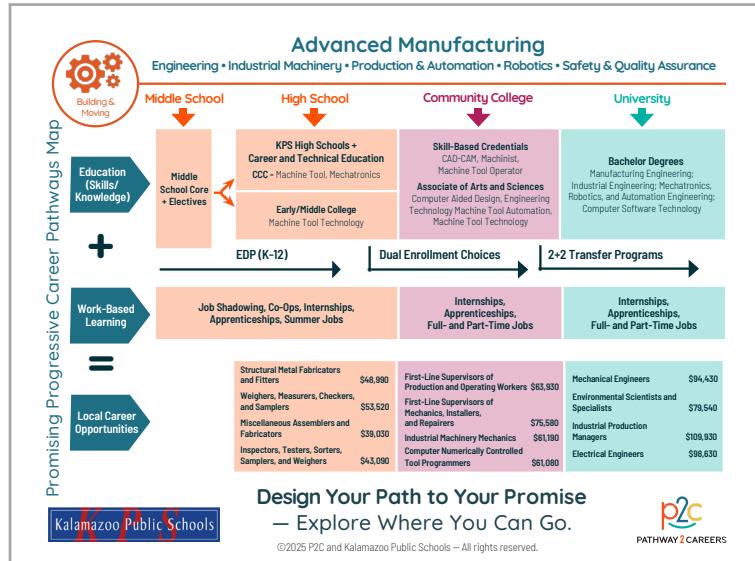


- **Job Titles & Median Wages:** See the specific job titles available in that field, along with the median annual salary.
- **Education Requirements:** Students and families will know exactly what kind of education is needed, whether it's a high school diploma, industry certification, associate's degree (2 years), bachelor's degree (4 years), or advanced degrees (6+ years).
- **Entry Points:** The maps offer students multiple ways to begin their journey. Students do not always need a four-year degree to begin a career. Many pathways provide earn-and-learn opportunities, allowing students to work in a part-time job or apprenticeship while continuing their education.

Guiding Students' Future: A School Counselor's Guide to the Kalamazoo Career Pathways Maps

1. **Encourage Students to Explore Careers by Cluster:** Students can start with a career cluster that is aligned with their EDP (e.g., Agriculture, Construction, Marketing & Sales).
2. **Help Them Identify a Target Career Pathway:** Students can explore career pathways that offer strong earning potential and promising growth in the region. They can select the role that best matches their interests and long-term goals, which then becomes their destination as they map out the education and training steps needed to reach it.
3. **Trace the Steps Backward:** Once you choose a target career pathway, look at the post-secondary education, certification, or training it requires. Then work backward from that goal to identify each step along the way, including what program of study to choose in high school, which post-secondary path to follow, in and out of school experiences (i.e. Career and Technical Education, apprenticeships, Dual Enrollment), and the milestones you will need to meet. This process supports clear short-term goals for today and long-term goals for the future.

4. Find Students' Entry Point: Students can look for “bridge” jobs or part-time roles that allow them to get their foot in the door in an industry, gain work experience, and learn about workplace processes while saving money for further education. For example, a student interested in healthcare might work as a medical assistant or a pharmacy technician, gaining hands-on experience and learning how a clinic or a pharmacy operates while completing relevant certifications or courses.



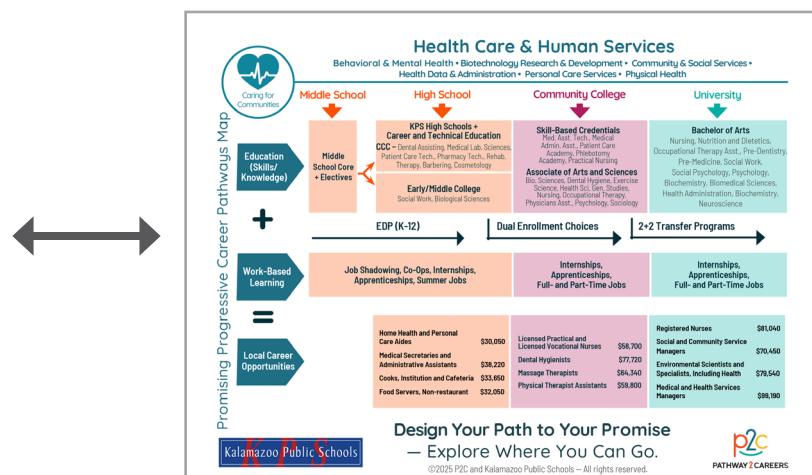
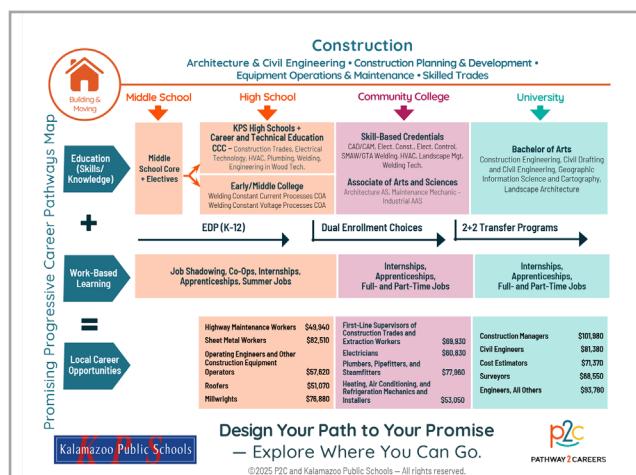
Across the top row, moving from left to right, the education pathways available within a specific career cluster are displayed. These opportunities begin in middle school and continue through high school, then progress into community college programs, university majors, and degrees.

Row two highlights work-based learning opportunities that students can begin exploring in middle school. Activities like job shadowing or volunteering offer an authentic career experience before formal employment. As students get older, these work-based learning opportunities expand, allowing them to gain valuable hands-on skills and experience over time.

The bottom row displays local job examples and their median wages. Notice how earnings typically

increase at each level of education (from high school to university). This data helps students strategically choose their postsecondary education pathway by showing whether it provides a clear financial advantage. Explore the Kalamazoo Labor Market Navigator for a complete list of occupations, including growth rates, potential wages, projected openings, and other relevant demographic information.

Try This: Ask students to select two different career maps. Compare the median wages, education requirements, and long-term career outlook for each option. Then discuss how each pathway aligns with their interests, strengths, and future goals, and help them identify any steps they can take now to get started. Finally, encourage students to reach out to professionals in the community network for job shadowing experiences in a career that interests them or is aligned with their EDP.



What courses should students take on their career journey?

Starting in middle school, students can choose elective courses that build their knowledge, skills, and abilities in a specific career field. In high school, they may further this preparation by adding career-connected pathways and dual enrollment, setting them up to pursue postsecondary programs or majors successfully.

- The courses in the top row are required middle school courses, along with electives.
- The courses in the middle row are high school choices that students can make to fulfill graduation requirements while preparing for a future career.
- Along the bottom row are a combination of high school CTE courses you can take, apprenticeship programs and certifications, as well as college-level dual enrollment courses that will help you prepare for a college-level credential or degree. If this is the career field they want to pursue, there are also community college and university majors that provide access to high-value careers in the Kalamazoo community.

Advanced Manufacturing								
Design Your Path to Your Promise — Here's How You Can Get There.								
MIDDLE SCHOOL	English Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies	World Language	Enrichment	Career Readiness	Elective Focus
	English	8 th Grade Math or Accelerated Math	8 th Grade Science	Social Studies	Mandarin Chinese	Physical Ed/Band, Orchestra, or Choir	Life Skills	Tech Smart
	English	7 th Grade Math or Accelerated Math	7 th Grade Science	Social Studies	Spanish for Begin. (Elective)	Physical Ed/Band, Orchestra, or Choir	Life Skills	Tech Smart
	English	8 th Grade Math or Algebra	Science/Robotics	Social Studies	Spanish Intermediate	Physical Ed/Band, Orchestra, or Choir	Life Skills	Tech Smart
HIGH SCHOOL	English Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies	World Language	Enrichment	Career Readiness	Elective Focus
	English 9 / Honors English	Algebra I and Geometry	Environ. Science & Biology (CEB)	World History	Mandarin Chinese	PE	Tech Smart	
	English 10 / Honors English	Geometry or Algebra II	Biology (DEE) or Chemistry or Physics	US History	Mandarin Chinese	Health	College/Career Readiness	Band, Orchestra, or Choir and other career-related programs below.
	English 11A or Honors or AP	Algebra II or Pre-Calculus	Physics or Chemistry or Earth Science	Gov or AP Gov	Mandarin Chinese / French	Drafting	Economics	
	College Eng 12 or Honors Eng	Pre-Calculus or AP Calculus	Astronomy or Geology	Social Studies Elective	Mandarin Chinese / French	Fine Arts	Electronics & Robotics	
Grade	Possible Career-Connected Pathway Choices			Dual Enrollment Courses		Postsecondary Programs/Majors for Occupations in this Career Cluster		
9	Computer Science/Software Engineering	Information Technology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning Computer Skills Fundamentals of Tech Fundamentals of Machine Tool Ops Basics of Mechanical Science Trends in Manufacturing CAD Design 		Certificates and Associate's Degrees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machinist Certificate CAD-CAM Certificate Machine Tool Operator, CDA CNC Operator, CDA Computer Aided Design, AAS Engineering Technology, AAS Machine Tool Tech, AAS Bachelor's and Advanced Degrees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanical Engineering Manufacturing Engineering Industrial Engineering Robotics Technology Electrical/Electronic Engineering Technology 		
10-12	Electronics & Robotics I and II	Drafting: General, Architectural, and Mechanical						
10-12	Computerized Manufacturing	Mechatronics: Robotics & Automation						
11-12	Statistics	Machine Tools						

Kalamazoo Public Schools

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How do students take advantage of college and career exploration resources?

As the first Promise community in the country, students have access to a wide range of programs and tools designed to help them prepare for and step into rewarding future careers. Whether they plan to pursue a two or four-year degree, attain a certification, or enter into the workforce, these resources can place your student on the *right path in the right direction*. To learn more about any of the resources, click the link to go to a specific page.

Kalamazoo Public Schools

College and Career Awareness & Exploration Resources

Higher Education

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE Community College in Kalamazoo

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

KALAMAZOO VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Local Career Training Programs

KALAMAZOO CAREER CONNECT

TEACH KALAMAZOO

KALAMAZOO RE-ENTRY CAREER CONNECT CAMPUS

TEACH KALAMAZOO

Labor Market Tools

Michigan Pathfinder

pathfinder

PURE MICHIGAN Talent Connect

Michigan Pathfinder

Michigan Pathfinder

pathfinder

PURE MICHIGAN Talent Connect

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College & Career Exploration and Resources

xello

Xello Career Exploration

Kalamazoo Public Schools uses the Xello platform so students in grades K-12 can build self-knowledge and explore options beyond high school.

CollegeBoard

SAT/PSAT – College Board

The SAT and PSAT are standardized tests meant to show colleges and universities how prepared students are for college by measuring key skills like reading comprehension, computational ability, and clarity of expression.

EBSCOlearning

EBSCO LearningGrids provides online platforms for academic, professional, and career development, and preparation experiences through Career and Technical Education (CTE) that prepare students for the changing and interconnected world of work.

careeronestop

Careeronestop

Careeronestop provides online resources across industries, how programs are started by college, and how to become an apprentice.

APPRENTICESHIPUSA

APPRENTICESHIPUSA

APPRENTICESHIPUSA provides apprenticeships across industries, how programs are started by college, and how to become an apprentice.

ASVAB

ASVAB

ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is a multiple-choice aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military.

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How can I learn more about Career Clusters?

The last two pages are provided by Advance CTE, an organization committed to helping students, teachers, counselors, parents, and employers make connections from school to work. You can see the clusters and the sub-clusters within each cluster, which allow you to understand the varied careers available to you, within the career field you are considering. For instance, if you are interested in the medical field, the Healthcare and Human Services cluster reveals several sub-clusters that go far beyond direct patient care roles like nurses or doctors. This can help you better understand the full range of opportunities available in your community. These pages are also available by clicking on the Cluster icon in the top left corner of pages 1 and 2. The Education Cluster icon is shown as an example.



Career Clusters Pathways to College & Career Readiness

The Framework: Wheel View

ADVANCE CTE
State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work

The diagram is a circular wheel divided into segments. The outer ring is labeled 'CROSS-CUTTING CLUSTERS' and contains 'Digital Technologies', 'Healthcare', 'Safety & Environmental Assurance', 'Manufacturing', 'Transportation, Distribution & Logistics', and 'Workforce Development & Technology'. The inner segments represent 'Career-Ready Practices' and 'Cluster Groupings'. The 'Cluster Groupings' section is divided into 'Healthcare and Human Services', 'Manufacturing', 'Transportation, Distribution & Logistics', and 'Workforce Development & Technology'. Each of these four groups contains several sub-clusters, such as 'Healthcare Support Services', 'Manufacturing Occupations', 'Transportation Occupations', and 'Workforce Development Occupations'. A 'KEY' at the bottom right indicates: Cross-Cutting Clusters (light grey), Sub-Clusters (medium grey), Clusters (dark grey), and Cluster Groupings (darkest grey).

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Advanced Manufacturing: Engineering and Producing Tomorrow's Solutions

Cluster Definition: The Advanced Manufacturing Career Cluster blends innovative technologies and practices to enhance design and production. It covers areas such as engineering, research and development, automation and artificial intelligence, equipment maintenance, safety protocols, and quality control. This Cluster aims to increase efficiency, reduce waste, ensure safety, and produce high-quality goods, driving the industry's growth and adapting to modern demands.

Sub-Clusters

Engineering: Careers that use engineering principles to develop and improve manufacturing processes and systems and to design products. Professionals in this field tackle production challenges, boost efficiency, leverage advanced technologies, and contribute to the sector's advancement. The manufacturing sector encompasses numerous types of engineering, including mechanical, electrical, chemical, biopharmaceutical, materials, and industrial. This Sub-Cluster also involves research and development and prototyping for emerging products and systems.

Industrial Machinery: Careers focused on working with manual equipment, such as computer numerical controlled (CNC) machines, 3D printers, quality control equipment, material handling tools, maintenance and repair devices, specialized machining and surface treatment machines, fabrication equipment, and energy management systems. Professionals in this field set up, operate, maintain, and repair advanced machinery, ensuring efficient and safe performance.

Production & Automation: Careers centered on the hands-on management and execution of manufacturing processes. This field involves automation, overseeing production lines, quality control, assembly and product finishing, and ensuring efficient workflow. This Sub-Cluster includes specialized sectors such as processed food and beverage production and textile manufacturing, emphasizing efficiency and adherence to industry standards across diverse production types.

Robotics: Careers involved in developing, implementing, and maintaining technologies that deploy robotics. This field encompasses roles focused on programming robotics, overseeing production lines enhanced by robotics, mechatronics, and smart manufacturing concepts; and ensuring that these technologies operate efficiently and safely.

Safety & Quality Assurance: Careers dedicated to ensuring workplace safety, worker health, environmental compliance, and product quality. Professionals in this field develop and implement standards and practices to maintain safe and sustainable operations while conducting rigorous testing and inspections to uphold product integrity.

Example Programs of Study

Engineering & Technology	Industrial Machine Mechanics
Pre-Engineering	Precision Machining
Semiconductor Manufacturing	Apparel & Textile Production
Engineering Technology	Manufacturing Production Process Development
	Industry 4.0
	Robotics Technology
	Safety & Environmental Assurance

Ready to Navigate?

Help students design their path to their *promise* today! Encourage students to engage in career discussions with their parents, guardians, school counselors, and career coach about how to incorporate the career data into their middle and high school course schedule.

Explore [The Progressive Promising Pathways Maps](#).



Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Labor Market	The relationship between the demand for workers by employers and the supply of workers (people seeking jobs) in a specific geographical area (Kalamazoo County)
Workforce Region	A geographic area defined by employment and economic trends, used to organize local labor market data, showing which industries, occupations, and skills are most in demand
Workforce Data	Current information about jobs, such as median wages, the number of existing jobs, and how many jobs are expected to be created (growth)
Job Zone	<p>The level of education required for an occupation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Zone 1 requires less than a high school diploma • Job Zone 2 requires a high school diploma • Job Zone 3 requires an industry certification or a two-year associate's degree • Job Zone 4 requires a four-year bachelor's degree • Job Zone 5 requires a master's or doctorate degree
High-Demand Occupation	Occupations that are growing or stable in predicted job openings in a specific workforce region
High-Wage	A wage higher than the Michigan median wage of \$46,940
High-Value Occupation	Occupations that are both high-wage and high-demand
Low-Value Occupation	Occupations that are low-wage (below \$46,940) and/or low-demand (unstable growth or below 0%)
Median Wage	The middle point of wage distribution, meaning half of the people working in a specific occupation earn more than this amount, and half earn less
Career Cluster	A grouping of occupations and industries based on similar skills and knowledge
Sub-Cluster	A specific grouping of occupations within a larger Career Cluster that share similar skills
Career Pathways Map	A visual representation that groups jobs based on career cluster and shows the typical progression, from middle and high school required education, career-connected pathways, dual enrollment options, postsecondary programs and majors, work-based learning options, and links to college and career resources
Industry Certification	A formal document (like a license or certificate) proving that a person has specific skills required by an industry, often earned faster and is less expensive than a college degree (e.g., welding certificate, IT certification)
Work-Based Learning	Experiences that combine classroom learning with authentic work experiences to develop career-relevant skills and knowledge. Examples include job shadowing, coops, internships, apprenticeships, and full and part time jobs
The Kalamazoo Promise	A scholarship program for KPS graduates providing up to 100% of tuition for postsecondary education at approved Michigan public institutions
Postsecondary Education	Education or training pursued after high school, including college, career and technical education, military training, and apprenticeships

In partnership with Kalamazoo Public Schools



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