



ALIGNMENT CHART

College and Workforce Readiness

■ **Second Step® High School**

About Second Step® High School

Second Step High School is a research-based social-emotional learning (SEL) program for Grades 9–12. It includes themed pathways with practices for school leaders and educators designed to help create a positive school climate, strengthen social-emotional skills, and encourage students to develop adaptive mindsets for navigating adolescence successfully. Supplemental classroom-based student activities reinforce skills students build from the schoolwide and educator practices and offer them further opportunities to learn and apply emerging social-emotional skills. The practices in this program involve the entire school community and are intended to produce positive schoolwide change.

About College and Workforce Readiness Frameworks and Standards

Secondary schools across the United States have identified several frameworks of competencies or skills to prepare their students for postsecondary success, such as 21st century skills, college and career readiness, Durable Skills, the Employability Skills Framework, and community-specific “portraits of a graduate.” Most states have college and career readiness as a measure of educational success in their accountability frameworks. This alignment references the most frequently used standards or competencies school leaders use to develop curricula and prepare their graduates. Although frameworks, names, and collections of competencies differ, certain skills are common to all frameworks. Some frameworks, like 21st century skills, have

multiple interpretations. The sources that were used to create this document are provided at the end.

21st Century Skills¹

The 21st century skills framework was formed and iterated on by governmental, academic, nonprofit, and corporate entities during the years before and decades after the turn of the 21st century to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required in today’s world for employees to be successful in their work. These skills continue to be referenced in multiple states’ academic standards.

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Application of Knowledge
- Intrapersonal Skills
- Interpersonal Skills

College and Career Readiness²

College and career readiness is a framework originating from a convergence of Standards for Success and the American Diploma Project with analysis completed by American College Testing in 2006.³ These competencies, although interpreted and applied differently across the United States, are part of many states’ academic standards aimed to prepare students for postsecondary success.

- Academic Engagement
- Process-Oriented Skills
- Interpersonal Engagement
- Ownership of Learning
- Transition Competencies

Durable Skills⁴

Durable Skills is a framework of 10 competencies identified by America Succeeds as the skills K–12 students need to have to be prepared for work or college. The competencies are based on 21st century skills research and an analysis of the skills referenced in 82 million United States job postings from 2019–2020 at the national and state level.

- Leadership
- Character
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Metacognition
- Mindfulness
- Growth Mindset
- Fortitude

Employability Skills Framework⁵

The Employability Skills Framework was informed by business organizations and federal agencies and developed through an initiative of the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education of the US Department of Education. The framework includes the skills below, recognized as essential to college and career readiness.

- Applied Academic Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Personal Qualities
- Technology Use
- Systems Thinking
- Communication Skills
- Information Use
- Resource Management
- Critical Thinking Skills

Portrait of a Learner: Kentucky⁶

Numerous states and districts are creating “portraits of a graduate” to define what students need to know and do by the time they graduate to be prepared for success after high school.⁷ These portraits include competencies and skills that the local agencies identify as necessary through research and community contributions and are unique to states and districts. Adopted in 2022, Kentucky’s Portrait of a Learner is an example of these types of documents and lists what students need to know and do to be “globally competitive.”⁶

- Engaged Citizen
- Critical Thinker
- Effective Communicator
- Empowered Learner
- Creative Contributor
- Productive Collaborator

Second Step® High School Academic Skills

Internal research on sources varying from state high school standards to college preparedness assessments led to the identification of academic skills shared by many college and workforce readiness standards and frameworks. These eight academic skills are reinforced in Second Step High School educator practices and student activities.

- Analysis
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Problem-Solving
- Real-World Application
- Reasoning
- Visualization

Several of the frameworks contain identical competencies, and many have commonalities. Pulling prominent themes from the frameworks resulted in the following list of competencies shared by all of them.

Skill	Definition
Critical Thinking	Uses creativity, reasoning, planning, and organization to solve problems and make informed decisions.
Collaboration	Engages effectively with others to work toward a common goal, listens actively, is respectful, and demonstrates empathy as a team contributor.
Communication	Exchanges, manages, and comprehends ideas and information effectively through written and verbal communication in digital and analog ways. Uses active listening.
Applied Academic Knowledge	Acquires academic knowledge with cognitive and behavioral skills. Uses reading, writing, mathematical, and scientific skills. Researches, locates, uses, and organizes information.
Interpersonal Engagement	Demonstrates respect, negotiates to resolve conflicts, uses positive social skills, and acts as a leader.
Ownership of Learning	Demonstrates adaptive mindset, resilience, sense of belonging, goal setting, planning, perseverance, self-advocacy, dedication to mastery, resourcefulness, and self-improvement.
Intrapersonal Skills	Takes responsibility for actions, understands self, manages time, takes initiative, has a positive attitude, and demonstrates integrity.
Creativity and Curiosity	Considers and shares new ideas and novel solutions developed with imagination and ingenuity.
Applied Real-World Knowledge and Planning	Gains and applies workplace skills to real life and career goals. Positively influences school and community. Manages resources and plans for postsecondary opportunities and future employment.

The chart below illustrates how Second Step® High School aligns with this collated list.

Competency	21st Century Skills	College and Career Readiness	Durable Skills	Employability Skills	Portrait of a Learner: Kentucky	Second Step® High School	Examples from Second Step® High School
Critical Thinking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging & Connection, Collection 3, Student Activity, Imaginary Audience, G9 • Well-Being & Community, Collection 1, Student Activity, Identifying and Managing Emotions, G11 • Well-Being & Community, Collection 3, Student Activity, What Would You Do? G9
Collaboration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging & Connection, Collection 1, Student Activity, Get-to-Know-You Bingo, G9–12 • Agency & Opportunity, Collection 1, Student Activity, Guess Who? G9–12 • Well-Being & Community, Collection 1, Educator Practice, Mind Breaks
Communication	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging & Connection, Collection 1, Educator Practice, Co-Creating Classroom Agreements • Agency & Opportunity, Collection 2, Student Activity, Strengths Mapping, G11 • Well-Being & Community, Collection 1, Student Activity, Compassion for a Friend, G12
Applied Academic Knowledge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence & Capability, Collection 1, Educator Practice, Reaching Mastery • Confidence & Capability, Collection 3, Student Activity, View, Analyze, Believe, G9 • Agency & Opportunity, Collection 2, Educator Practice, Academic Discussions
Interpersonal Engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging & Connection, Collection 3, Student Activity, Digital Connections, G10 • Belonging & Connection, Collection 3, Student Activity, Repairing Relationships, G11 • Belonging & Connection, Collection 3, Student Activity, What's Fundamental Attribution Error? G12
Ownership of Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence & Capability, Collection 2, Educator Practice, Making Success Attainable • Confidence & Capability, Collection 2, Student Activity, Staying Positive and Confident, G12 • Agency & Opportunity, Collection 1, Educator Practice, Choice Boards
Intrapersonal Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging & Connection, Collection 3, Educator Practice, Communicating Belonging • Confidence & Capability, Collection 3, Student Activity, Practical Positive Thinking, G10 • Well-Being & Community, Collection 1, Student Activity, Memories from Past and Future, G10

Competency	21st Century Skills	College and Career Readiness	Durable Skills	Employability Skills	Portrait of a Learner: Kentucky	Second Step [®] High School	Examples from Second Step [®] High School
Creativity and Curiosity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence & Capability, Collection 3, Educator Practice, Authentic Feedback Agency & Opportunity, Collection 3, Educator Practice, Implementing Student Feedback Well-Being & Community, Collection 3, Student Activity, What's Normal? G11
Applied Real-World Knowledge and Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence & Capability, Collection 3, Student Activity, Balancing Online Time, G11 Agency & Opportunity, Collection 2, Student Activity, Collective Contributions, G12 Well-Being & Community, Collection 3, Student Activity, Showing Gratitude, G10

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