



A Blueprint for Success

7 steps to create a shared vision for the competencies and mindsets your graduates will need to be successful in college, career, and life.

Follow these steps that other educators have found to be a critical to developing a Portrait of a Graduate.

1 Assemble a Design Committee

A Portrait of a Graduate should reflect the goals and values of the community so it's important to include not only school personnel but representatives from the broader community, including students, families, and community members with diverse experiences and backgrounds.

2 Outline a High-Level Vision

Even though each school within your district is unique, they are bound by a shared goal: ensuring students are prepared to be successful, contributing members of society. But what does that mean and look like for your community? Start by brainstorming the hopes, dreams, and aspirations that your community has for its students once they graduate high school.

3 Create a List of Desired Competencies & Capacities

Reflect on the competencies, skills, and traits that support deeper learning and that are necessary for post-secondary success in our rapidly changing and complex world. Cognitive skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and communication should be considered along with personal and interpersonal competencies like creativity, adaptability, self-motivation, and accountability.

4 Refine the List of Competencies & Capacities

Examine the full list of competencies through the lens of your district's mission and values and what research tells us about learning. Winnow the list down to the four to eight most critical competencies that will provide students with the skills and mindsets to support their success in college, career, and as citizens of the community. Share the list with stakeholders throughout the community to get feedback and buy-in before finalizing the competencies.

5 Create a Visual Representation of the Portrait of a Graduate

Design an image that showcases the agreed upon competencies, skills, and mindsets. This graphic will be a powerful tool as you roll out and share your Portrait of a Graduate with staff, students, families, and community members.

6 Determine How to Measure Student Progress Toward Mastering the Competencies in the Portrait of a Graduate

Evaluate how well your current assessments measure the competencies and skills included in the Portrait of a Graduate. You may need to add additional data collection methods to measure students' growth in the desired outcomes.

Performance-based assessments, like [CAE's college and career readiness assessment \(CCRA+\)](#), are one way for students' to demonstrate not only what they've learned but what they can do. With CCRA+, students are situated in real-world scenarios that require them to put their critical thinking, problem-solving, and written communication skills to work. The resulting data can be used for formative and summative purposes, including evaluating how well students have developed essential academic and career readiness skills at the beginning and/or end of a particular class or academic year, or to measure growth over multiple years.

7 Put Your Profile into Action

Creating a Portrait of a Graduate is just the starting point to redesigning teaching and learning so that every student can achieve the profile's vision. While changing culture, systems, and processes is a multi-year endeavor, it begins by sharing the Portrait of a Graduate with the community. This can include presenting it to the school board for adoption; posting it to the district website; holding community meetings to explain what the profile is and how it will be used; reviewing it with students, educators, and families at the start of each school year; and more!



Visit www.cae.org to learn more about using CCRA+ to measure students' mastery of many of the competencies that are included in your Portrait of a Graduate.