

Key Enhancements

July 23, 2026, Release

1. Updated National Career Clusters

XAP has adopted the updated National Career Clusters® Framework, which streamlines the model from 16 Career Clusters to 14. The revised framework includes renamed clusters, the consolidation of several existing clusters, and the retirement of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) cluster. In addition, the categories previously known as “Pathways” are now referred to as “Sub-Clusters.” For more information on the National Career Cluster Framework, please see: <https://careertech.org/career-clusters/>

IHaveaPlanIowa has been updated to reflect these changes ensuring the career exploration tools your students use reflect the real world of work more accurately.

The New Career Clusters at a Glance

The 16 Clusters have been reorganized into 14 and all have been renamed:

Original Cluster	New Cluster
Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources	Agriculture
Architecture & Construction	Construction
Arts, A/V Technology & Communications	Arts, Entertainment, & Design
Business Management & Administration	Management & Entrepreneurship
Education & Training	Education
	Energy & Natural Resources
Finance	Financial Services
Government & Public Administration	COMBINED into Public Service & Safety
Health Science	COMBINED into Healthcare & Human Services
Hospitality & Tourism	Hospitality, Events & Tourism
Human Services	COMBINED into Healthcare & Human Services
Information Technology	Digital Technology
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	COMBINED into Public Service & Safety
Manufacturing	Advanced Manufacturing
Marketing	Marketing & Sales
STEM	REMOVED
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	Supply Chain & Transportation

What’s New: Feature by Feature

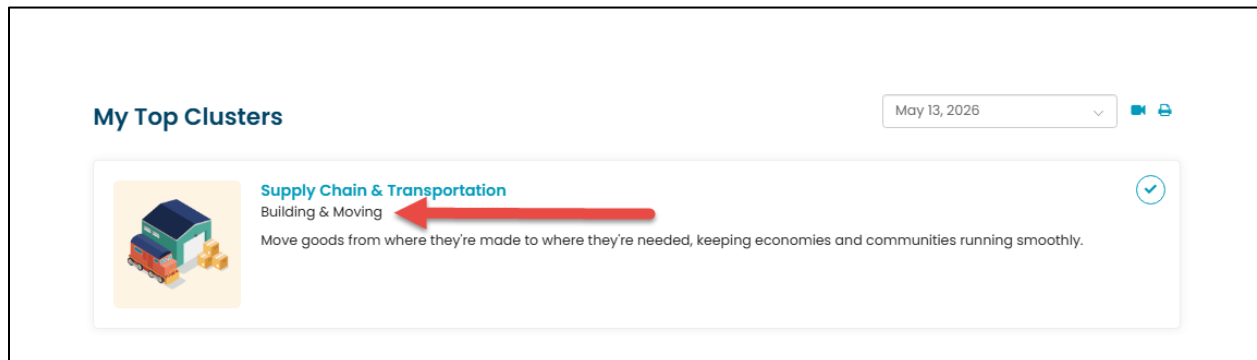
1. Career Cluster Survey

The Career Cluster Survey is now based upon Advance CTE's Career Interest Survey for the new Career Clusters. Learn more about the survey here: <https://careertech.org/resource-center/series/career-interest-surveys/>

For students who previously completed the survey:

- Students whose previous top cluster(s) **can be mapped to a new Cluster** (e.g., Health Science → Healthcare & Human Services) will see the **updated Cluster name** in their results.
- Students whose previous top result was **STEM** will not have a mapped result, since STEM has been retired with no single equivalent. They will see a specific message explaining this and directing them to retake the survey to find their new best-fit Cluster.
- All students who had previously completed the survey will see a banner on their results page noting that Career Clusters have been updated, with a prompt to review their results and if needed, take the survey again.

When survey results are displayed, each top Cluster now shows both the **Cluster Grouping** (the broader category the Cluster belongs to) and the **Cluster Name** — for example, *Cultivating Resources / Agriculture* or *Building & Moving / Construction* — giving students additional context for understanding where their interests fit within the larger Career Cluster framework.



Career Cluster Survey results with new Cluster grouping shown

Educators -- No action required. You may want to let students know their Career Cluster Survey ratings may look different and encourage them to review them.

2. Plan of Study

As part of the Career Cluster Framework update, Cluster-based and Pathway-based course plans are being retired. Going forward, course planning will be built around local programs of study created or edited then enabled by your school — giving you more direct control over what students see and ensuring course plans reflect what's actually available at your school.

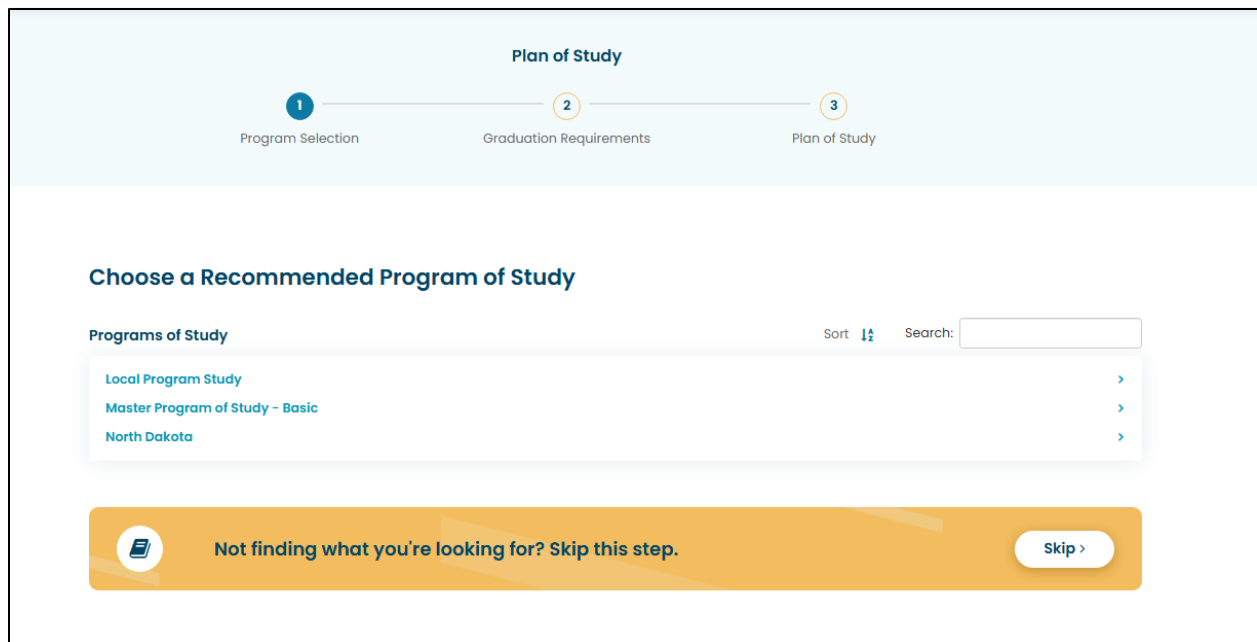
Student View

When a student creates or edits a course plan, they will only see programs of study created or edited and enabled by your school. The Career Cluster and Career Pathway options that previously appeared in the plan selector are no longer available.

Students who already have a course plan based on a Career Cluster or Pathway will notice:

- The Cluster association on their plan will no longer appear.
- Any recommended courses that came from the Cluster-based plan will no longer be shown.

No course data is lost. Every course a student has enrolled in, planned, or marked as completed is fully preserved. Students can continue working on their existing plan and can create a new plan based on available local programs of study at any time.



Only local programs of study are available for students to select

Professional Center View

The tools to create, edit, enable, disable, or delete Career Cluster and Career Pathway course plans have been removed from the Professional Center. As an administrator, when you navigate to Administration → Course Planning → Programs of Study, you will only see local programs of study and the tools to manage them.

The plan picker that students see is now limited to programs of study you have created and enabled at the district or school level. This means **what you set up is what students see** — there

are no longer background Cluster-based options appearing to students that you haven't explicitly configured.

3. Career Plan Builder & Career Profiles

The course recommendations that appeared when a student explored a specific career have also changed. Previously these recommendations came from a Career Cluster course plan. That experience has been replaced with AI-generated, expert-reviewed guidance tailored to each individual career and covering grades 6–12. Students will now consistently see meaningful suggestions for helpful classes, activities, and skills organized by grade level.

What To Learn

High School

Suggested Steps to Prepare for a Accountant Career (Grades 6–12)

Check out the recommended classes, activities and skills below for each grade level. These recommendations are very general -- discuss your specific course plan with your school counselors and teachers.

 Grades 6–8

 Grade 9

 Grade 10

Helpful Classes

 Geometry

 Accounting

 Economics

 Business Communication

 Spreadsheet Applications

Recommended Learning Areas

 accounting basics

 budgeting

 financial records

 data tables

 business communication

Things to Try

Use spreadsheets to compare spending patterns, balances, or profit and loss examples, Create a mock payroll, billing, or bookkeeping worksheet and check for errors, Analyze a company or nonprofit budget summary and explain what the numbers suggest, Practice writing short notes that explain financial results in plain language

Focus Skills

 Numerical reasoning

 Accuracy

 Recordkeeping

 Data analysis

 Communication

 Grade 11

 Grade 12

 Course names and availability are different at every school. Some of these classes may not be offered where you are. Talk to your school counselor or teacher to find the best options for you.

Suggested Steps for the Accountant Career Profile

4. Career Cluster Map

The Career Cluster Map activity has been fully updated to reflect the new framework.

For students who previously completed the Career Cluster Map:

- Star ratings are automatically carried forward and students who had STEM as their "Most Interested In" selection will see "Not Sure" after migration and are encouraged to review the new Clusters and choose a new favorite.
- All students who had previously completed the activity will see a banner on their results page noting that Career Clusters have been updated, with a prompt to review their results and re-select a favorite if needed. This banner is active through the 2026–27 school year.

Educators -- No action required. You may want to let students know their Career Cluster Map ratings may look different and encourage them to review them.

5. Saved Career Clusters

The activity has been **renamed** from "Saved Career Clusters and Career Pathways" to "**Saved Career Clusters.**"

For students who previously saved Career Clusters:

- Previously saved Clusters have been updated to their new names using the official crosswalk.
- **Saved Pathways have been deleted** — Pathways no longer exist in the new framework. Students will not see their previously saved Pathways.
- The **STEM cluster** has been replaced in each student's saved list with the four Clusters that now cover those careers: Advanced Manufacturing, Energy & Natural Resources, Public Service & Safety, and Healthcare & Human Services.
- All students who had saved Clusters prior to the update will see a **banner** explaining the changes and inviting them to review their updated list.

Educators -- No action required. You may want to let students know their saved list may look different especially for students who had saved the STEM cluster.

6. Favorite Career Cluster (formerly Focus Career Cluster)

As noted earlier in these release notes, the Focus Career Cluster activity has been renamed and has a fresh new design.

For students who previously selected a Favorite Career Cluster:

- Previously saved Focus Career Cluster selections were automatically carried forward to the new Cluster names.
- Students who had **STEM** as their Favorite Career Cluster will have that selection cleared. They will need to choose a new Favorite from the updated cluster list.

Educators – *Inform students who had saved STEM as their Favorite Career Cluster that they will need to select a new favorite Cluster. Please note that if a student completed the Focus (now Favorite Career Cluster) by selecting the STEM cluster in an earlier grade, their completion is retained for reporting.*

7. Additional Updates

Career Exploration Content Recreation, volunteering, and career exploration articles have been remapped to the correct new Clusters.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) WBL organization Cluster assignments have been automatically updated to the new framework, and the Cluster drop-down educators use when adding a new organization now reflects the 14 new Clusters.

Career Finder and Search Career Finder now displays Cluster names only — selecting a Cluster automatically returns all careers within it, making the tool simpler for students.

2. New ACT Filter in the Student Finder

The Student Finder in the Professional Center now includes an ACT filter in the College Planning category, following the same layout and visual pattern as the existing FAFSA filters. Educators can filter students by their most recent ACT activity response using one of four options: "I plan to take the ACT," "I would like assistance with a fee waiver," "I do not plan to take the ACT," or "I have taken the ACT." One option can be selected at a time, and the ACT filter works alongside other Student Finder filters to narrow results further.

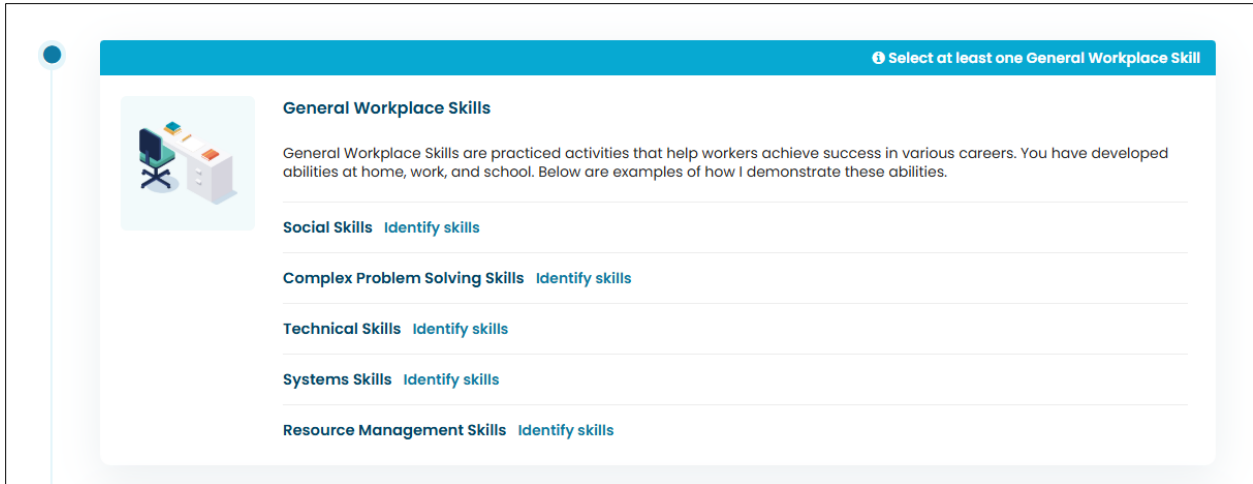
The screenshot shows the 'Student Finder' interface. At the top is a navigation bar with tabs: 'Students & Groups', 'Reports', 'Resources', 'Communication', 'Colleges & Applications', 'Work-Based Learning', and 'Administration'. Below this is a blue header with a person icon and the text 'Student Finder'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has two sections: 'Student Characteristics' and 'Student Activities'. 'Student Characteristics' includes a list of filters: Graduation Year, Group, Age, Sex, Ethnicity, and GPA. 'Student Activities' includes a section for 'Career Planning'. The right column is titled 'Find Students' and contains a 'Cancel and go back' link, a 'College Planning - ACT' section with the instruction 'Include students who have:', and four radio button options: 'I plan to take the ACT', 'I would like assistance with a fee waiver', 'I do not plan to take the ACT', and 'I have taken the ACT'. Below these options is a 'Clear All' link and a blue 'View matching students' button.

New ACT filter in the Student Finder

2. Activity Completion Ribbons Expanded

Completion-status ribbons have been added to more IHaveaPlanIowa activities. Each of the following activities now shows a blue ribbon with a prompt to get started before completion, and a green ribbon with the completion date once finished when assigned.

- Annual Reflection,
- General Workplace Skills,
- Early Skills,
- Personal Management Style,
- Personal Values and Priorities,
- Cover Letter Creator,
- Job Interview Practice



Select at least one General Workplace Skill

General Workplace Skills

General Workplace Skills are practiced activities that help workers achieve success in various careers. You have developed abilities at home, work, and school. Below are examples of how I demonstrate these abilities.

Social Skills Identify skills

Complex Problem Solving Skills Identify skills

Technical Skills Identify skills

Systems Skills Identify skills

Resource Management Skills Identify skills

Completion ribbon added to General Workplace Skills activity

3. New: Add a Note When Declining a Student's WBL Application

When you decline a student's application for a Work-Based Learning opportunity, you can now include a short message explaining why, using the same way you've been able to when declining a recommendation request.

What's new:

- A feedback field now appears in the decline confirmation modal in the Professional Center
- Your note is included in the email notification sent to the student (subject line: "Update on Your Application for [Opportunity Name]")
- Your note also appears in the student's application history on their WBL Opportunities page

Why it matters: Students often don't know why an application wasn't accepted. A quick note gives them useful, actionable context instead of a silent decline.

Bug Fixes & Improvements

- *Release Student Accounts* - The "Browse by Year of Graduation" filter in the Release Student Accounts tool now includes older graduation years, going back to 2010. Administrators can now locate and release accounts for students from earlier graduating classes directly, without having to browse by last name and sort the results manually.
- *Basic Skills Survey* – The display of the results was updated so the results text displays properly.