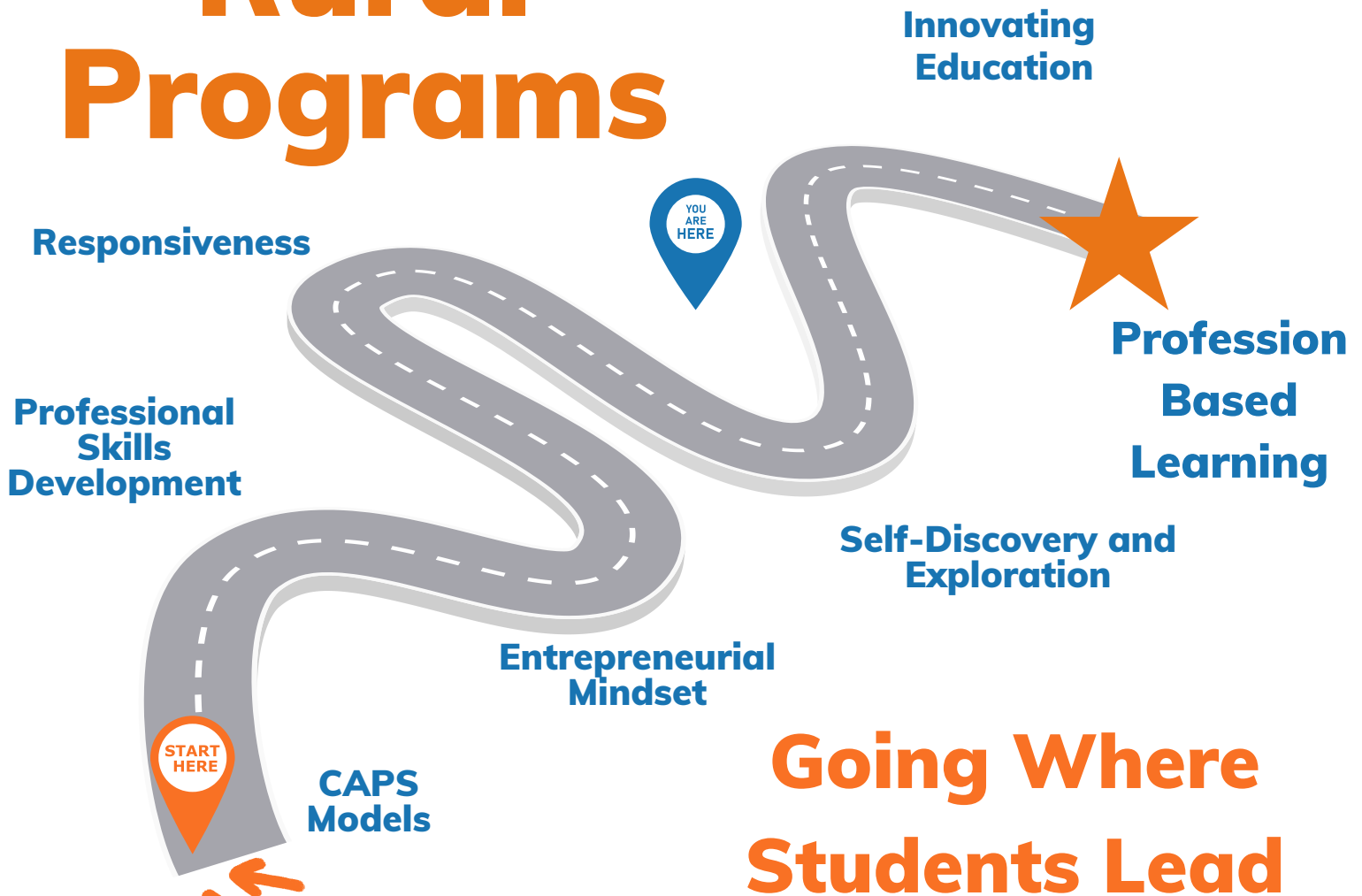




capsnetwork
collaborate · innovate · educate

Pathway to Purpose

Rural Programs



yourcapsnetwork.org

ABOUT

The CAPS Network is comprised of over 100 affiliate profession-based learning programs across 21 states and four countries. We are like-minded educators focused on building potential pathways for students to find their passion and develop skills that will support their future careers.

The CAPS education model is an innovative approach to education with pedagogy, content, and tools focused on preparing students with the skills necessary for life after high school. The following are steps, insights and tools intended to offer guidance in designing learning situations and experiences that require students to execute the various skills, competencies and character qualities deemed necessary for success regardless of their career path or the types of jobs they may hold in the future.

GOING WHERE STUDENTS LEAD

CAPS Network programs span from coast to coast, and include a growing cohort of international affiliates. We serve tens of thousands of students across the CAPS Network. Our longest tenured program and the original CAPS model, Blue Valley CAPS, has been pioneering profession-based learning (Pro-BL) for well over a decade.

CAPS leads the nation in the development and adoption of Pro-BL at scale, and has experienced a steady trendline of growth as communities and districts work together to demand a better learning practice that is future-proof, student-centered, and puts young people on their path to potential - no matter where they start or where they want to go.



Snap the code to hear how the CAPS Network empowers students!



To prepare students for jobs that haven't been created yet, we need to teach them how to be great problem solvers so they'll be ready for anything.

CAPS Core Values

*There are **FIVE CORE VALUES** that guide the design and implementation of each CAPS Program. Each principle must be built into each strand for it to achieve the goals of the innovation.*

- 1** **PROFESSION-BASED LEARNING** – Instructors develop real-world, project-based learning strategies through collaborations with business and community partners. These interactions enhance the learning experience, preparing students for college and career.
- 2** **PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT** – Unique experiences allow students to cultivate transformative professional skills such as understanding expectations, time management and other essential business values. These skills are critical to providing students a competitive advantage in their post-secondary education and professional careers.
- 3** **SELF-DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION** – Students realize their strengths and passions by exploring and experiencing potential professions. This allows them to make informed decisions about their future, while learning to exhibit leadership.
- 4** **ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET** – Instructors create an environment where creative thinking and problem solving is encouraged. An innovative culture is key to fostering entrepreneurial learning and design thinking.
- 5** **RESPONSIVENESS** – CAPS supports high-skill, high-demand careers through ongoing innovation in curriculum development, programs and services based on local business and community needs.

WHY CAPS

The power of the CAPS Network is vast - providing access to a diverse community of practice, a deep and established well of relationships and connections to professional partners, post-secondary institutions, teachers and students, and a robust knowledge base in the contemporary Pro-BL pedagogy, including future trends aligned to market factors, workforce demand, and student choice.

Profession-Based Learning (Pro-BL) complements college preparation by adding a dimension of career focus that supports students finding their

passions and strengths and matching them to opportunities in the market.

Every part of K-12 education needs to redesign its approach and outcomes through the integration of real-world learning to prepare our customers - the students - for that future.

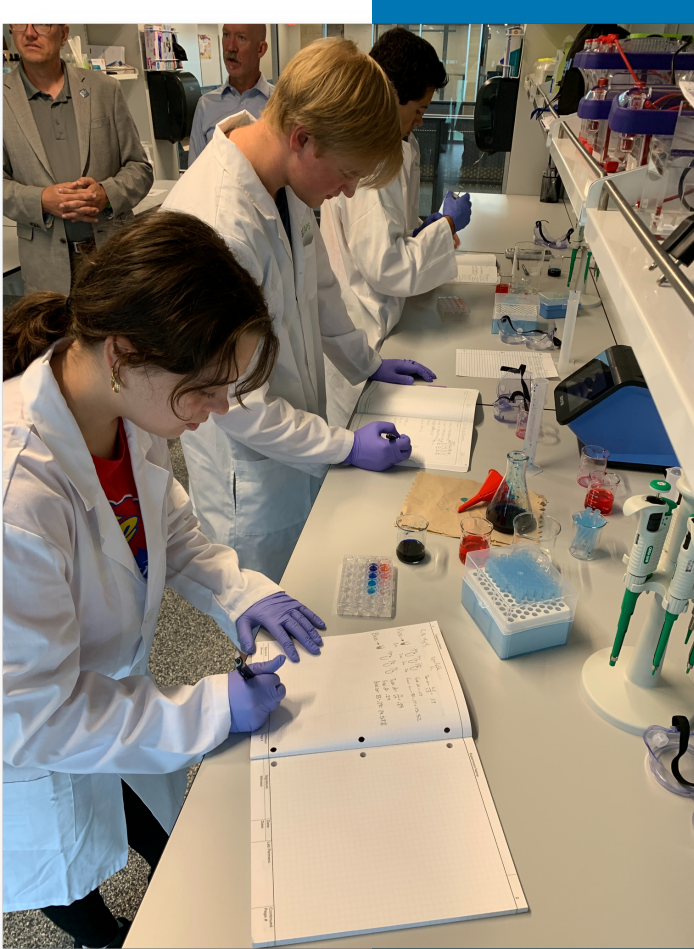
Pro-BL is the highest form of experiential learning. Instructors design real-world learning experiences through collaborations with industry partners. These personalized learning experiences will challenge the student to apply technical and essential skills in an authentic professional situation to develop outcomes that satisfy real needs.



"[The] best part of CAPS was gaining the real-world experience, connecting with professionals, and growing as a student/person professionally."

- CAPS Student

CAPS REIMAGINES EDUCATION...



...where the community is the classroom.

Where students master academic knowledge and skills by diving into challenging projects in partnership with local businesses, tech institutions, civic organizations, and nonprofits.

...with a clear focus on students.

Where students have ownership in—and responsibility for—how they learn. Where learning is based on each student's needs.

...where all students are prepared for college and careers.

Where students actively explore their personal and career interests early on and participate in high-quality, real-world internships and apprenticeships.

CAPS is at the center of an ecosystem in which industry, high school, community partners and post secondary options work together for economic and future ready work force development.

CAPS MODELS



CAPS has established archetype models to help you envision how to get started with Pro-BL.

CAPS is not a one-size-fits-all system, and most affiliates (schools/districts) take a modular and hyper-personalized approach based on local assets, shared goals and circumstantial drivers.

Programs fall along two spectrums: Rural to Urban and Center-based to Industry-Embedded.

Archetype Drivers:

- student density and mobility
- industry density and engagement
- where Pro-BL happens
- available school resources

RURAL AFFILIATES

Alexandria CAPS (MN)



Nebraska CAPS



Basin CAPS (UT)



Troy County CAPS (MO)



Cedar Valley CAPS



Washington CAPS (MO)



**Center Based" includes programs embedded in a high school.

** Not a complete list of all rural CAPS programs

RURAL MODEL

The rural model is a program modality that leverages strong community ties and the entrepreneurial mindset for resource effective start up. This modality of Pro-BL is innately flexible allowing schools to elevate existing CTE offerings, embed Pro-BL into core curriculum and expand partnerships with the local economy.

Rural programs thrive because of motivated community support. Community partnerships, near and far, help create student to career pathways that benefit both employer and employee. The power of Pro-BL in this model is in maximizing and expanding student awareness of available industry and career options. Rural CAPS programs are cited as positive contributions to communities' economic development.



RURAL MODEL KEY FACTORS

Your community has a unique set of stakeholders and concerns that influence the CAPS model you create. Your format depends upon community, school resources, school size, existing programs and more. We have gathered stories that speak to common factors experienced by current CAPS programs during their start up phase.

"We don't have industry"

You don't need to be in a city to find business partners ready to support your efforts. Local chambers of commerce are excellent resources. Ask your Chamber to help connect you to small businesses willing to either host a class or provide mentorship and projects. Some programs have a full time staff member provided by a chamber of commerce or have a strand hosted at the chamber.

Rebecca Merriman of GO CAPS Monett shares that she has more business partner interest than she does students. This comes from intentional communication with all stakeholders.

"We can't do it alone"

CAPS programs rely on the support of multiple stakeholders to sustain programming. Find multiple champions, both inside and outside of the district, to uplift the work as you get started. You will have a program that will thrive through change in staffing and leadership.

If you are concerned your district isn't big enough, consider bringing in other rural districts to partner with you. Or you can open the CAPS experience to your entire school. Nebraska CAPS includes a CAPS experience across the comprehensive high school. While this allows all students a Pro-BL experience, it is important to consider the impact of student choice or lack thereof.

Looking for more guidance on building community partnerships?



Get the "Building & Growing Community Partnerships" Playbook.

"The best part of CAPS is being able to network and work with businesses on projects that will affect a group of people. Seeing the project come to light through communication, meetings, and presentations." - CAPS Student

Socio-Economic Barriers

Developing a professional culture with a professional dress code is one way CAPS programs distinguish themselves from the traditional high school setting. Professional dress - clothing outside of a teenager's normal wardrobe - can be a barrier to entry. Several CAPS programs have created clothing closets or provided an alternative to students in need of assistance. For example, in a medicine and healthcare strand, CAPS can provide one set of scrubs to each student providing the student with a professional uniform. This is an excellent opportunity to partner with a local business for in-kind donations.



Clothing closets are a great way for CAPS students to "pass down" resources for future students who might need assistance.

Getting Outside the Classroom

Transportation is a reason some rural affiliates are based in the traditional high school or CTE center. This alleviates the need for daily travel, but also encourages intentional invitations to mentors and business partners to engage within the program's physical space - literally bringing business in. But consider that a big part of the CAPS experience is getting "outside the classroom." Embracing technology and open space is a great way to get students outside-the-classroom experience without leaving your primary location.

When choosing a space to host your CAPS courses, find space that is open and transparent - in other words, a place that doesn't feel like a classroom. At Washington CAPS the business class converted a large manufacturing floor in a CTE center to include glass walled collaboration rooms, a maker's space and flexible seating.

You can use technology to your advantage by bringing in guest speakers, mentors and site visits using video calls, co-working software and AR/VR. Many CAPS programs use resources like Basecamp, Monday and Slack. Almost all use LinkedIn.

SPOTLIGHT: GREATER OZARKS CAPS OF MONETT

GO CAPS MONETT SHAPSHOT



Founded in 2015

Students - 59*

High Schools - 6-10

Pathways

- Medicine & Healthcare
- Agri-Business & Food Systems
- Global Business & Entrepreneurship
- Teacher Education



GO CAPS Monett (MO)



Embracing Community

GO (Greater Ozarks) CAPS Monett in rural south-west Missouri approached CAPS with energy and intention from all stakeholders. In 2014 Monett school administrators and community business leaders knew they wanted to start their own CAPS program after visiting existing programs. After their visit, administrators knew, "[they] wanted to make sure that [their] small town, rural students had the same competitive advantage as any other student," said Rebecca Merriman, director of GO CAPS Monett.

The Monett team set out with the intention of embedding their program within local industry. Differentiation from the well established CTE center nearby was the key factor in this decision. In order to make it happen, Merriman had to go beyond initial industry partners.

In the early stages of program development, Merriman used conversations around the "skills gap" as a conversation starter. The conversation continued by outlining the various levels a company could choose to engage: guest speaking, projects, mentorship and hosting a class for a year.

Thanks to early inclusion and these conversations Jack Henry & Associates, the University of Missouri and Cox Monett Hospital are just a few of the locations hosting courses.

SPOTLIGHT: GO CAPS MONETT

Monett administrators knew they needed a diverse team to make the program work. In addition to having the district's administrative leadership on board, the district hired Rebecca Merriman from industry to spearhead the development effort. From there, instructors from both industry and out-of-the-box teachers from the traditional high school rounded out the team.

Initially GO CAPS Monett served students within the Monett school district and two strands were offered in one session. This allowed the district to create the initial schedule for the program. Merriman called parents letting them know their students were eligible for the CAPS experience to drive initial enrollment.

GO CAPS Monett added three strands in the following years. Additionally they began inviting surrounding rural school districts to participate. This increased enrollment to allow for several strands to be offered in two sessions instead of one.

"Trust what you have. It will build."

- Rebecca Merriman, GO CAPS Monett Director

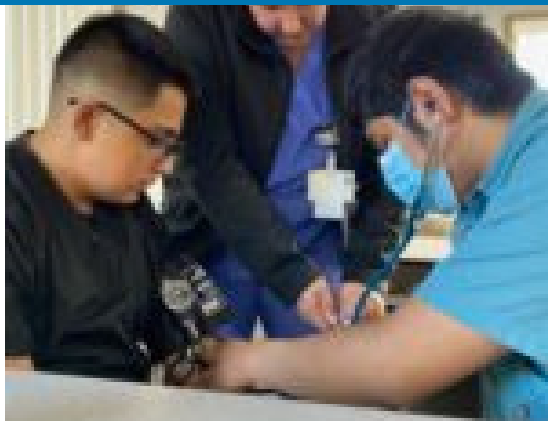


Key Factors

- Go where students lead
- Early and strong buy-in from school leaders such as superintendent, high school principals and counselors.
- Create clear distinction between CTE and CAPS.
- Figure out how to effectively communicate the impact of CAPS early and often

Tips

- Go where students lead
- Be specific with your ask to local businesses: "I'm going to ask for classroom space."
- Share a newsletter and annual review with stakeholders



Get Started

Are you ready to start a CAPS program in your community? Use these action items to get started.

□ Contact CAPS Network

- The best place to start is by talking with a member of our team.
- Find CAPS Affiliates local to you. You can find a map of our affiliates on our home page.

□ Visit a CAPS Affiliate

- We encourage you to visit one or more CAPS affiliates when exploring the model. We can help identify programs to visit.
- When choosing which affiliates to visit, consider which visit might be most like and unlike your community.
- When visiting make sure to travel with community stakeholders: superintendent, principals, students, community business partners and others.

□ Define Your Goal for Implementation

- Why do you want to bring CAPS to your community?
- Spend time envisioning the future: What will your community look like in 5 or 10 years because of your CAPS program?

"The best part of CAPS was being able to get hands on experience in aerospace engineering by building a plane. The challenges I faced along the way tested the limits of my problem solving and taught me a lot of lessons about the real world. Also hearing about the business aspects of engineering through our mentor helped me gain a lot of perspective about the industry." - CAPS Student

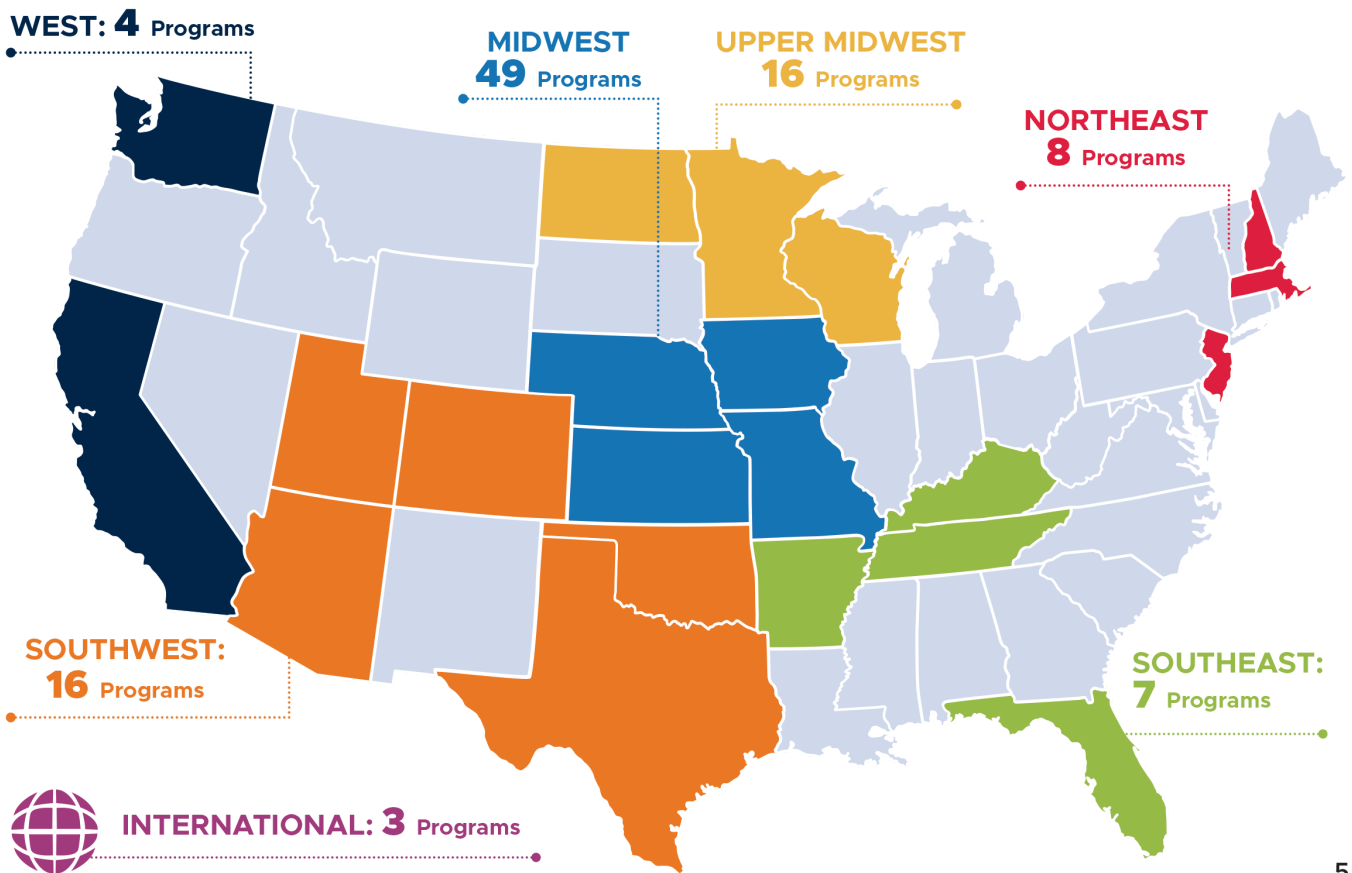
□ Identify Key Stakeholders

- Stakeholders are the people who will interact with and have a vested interest in your CAPS program.
- Identify people within the school district who are ready to support your CAPS program. Who will advocate to teachers, parents and school board members?
- Research and identify business partners who will become mentors, clients and advocates for your program.
- Use the [Building and Growing Community Partnerships](#) playbook for complete guide to identifying and engaging your community partnerships.

□ Explore CAPS Resources

- Visit our website for videos and resources to help you learn more about how the CAPS Network can help you get started.
- Look over the [CAPS Playbooks](#): "Diving Into Profession-Based Learning," "Building & Growing Community Partnerships," and "Innovating Education for Careers of the Future."
- [Listen to our podcasts](#): The Network and The CAPS Playbook.
- [Sign up for Network Connect](#) our monthly newsletter, on our website.





CAPS AFFILIATES

101 Programs
170+ School Districts
21 States
4 Countries

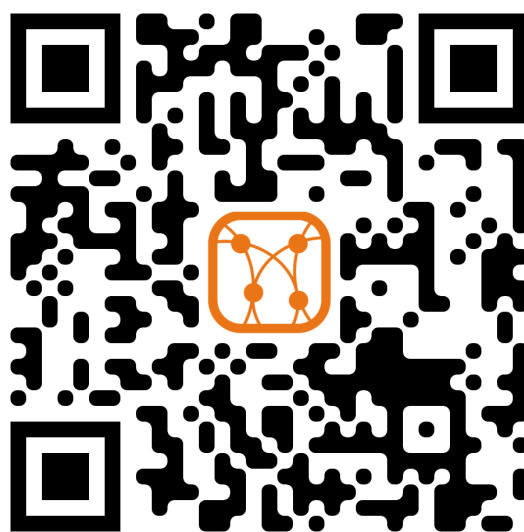
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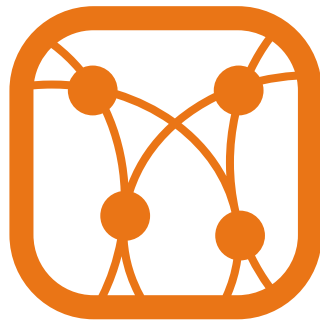


JOIN THE NETWORK.

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

- Review our Playbooks
- Listen to *The Network* podcast
- Screen our documentary *Where Students Lead*
- Contact us to get started with your CAPS experience!





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