



# Meeting the Career Readiness Imperative

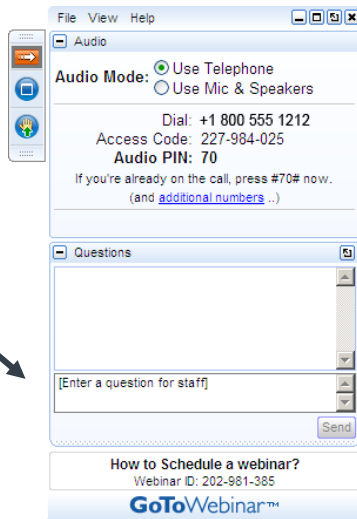
Aiding Transitions to Careers through Professional Skill Development

Superintendent Leadership Forum

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## Questions panel



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# Integrating Academic and Career Development

## Best Practices for Scaling Career Awareness and Exposure

1

**Cultivate Early and Broad Career Awareness**



1. Worlds of Work Middle School Expo
2. Pathways Essentials
3. Pathways Teacher Development Lessons
4. Structured Career Reflection

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**Lower Access Barriers to Career Experiences**



5. Community-Sourced Project Based Learning
6. General Education Externships
7. Virtual Work-Based Learning

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**Offer Personalized and Frequent Career Decision Support**



8. Career-Based Scheduling
9. Industry-Based Advisory Cohorts
10. Employer Mentorships

4

**Formally Aid Workplace Transitions**



11. Employer-Led Workplace Skills Intensives
12. Ethnographic Career Research
13. Curriculum-Wide Transferable Skills Call Outs
14. School-Wide Elevator Pitches
15. Career Interests Capstone Presentation
16. Student Workplace Performance Awards

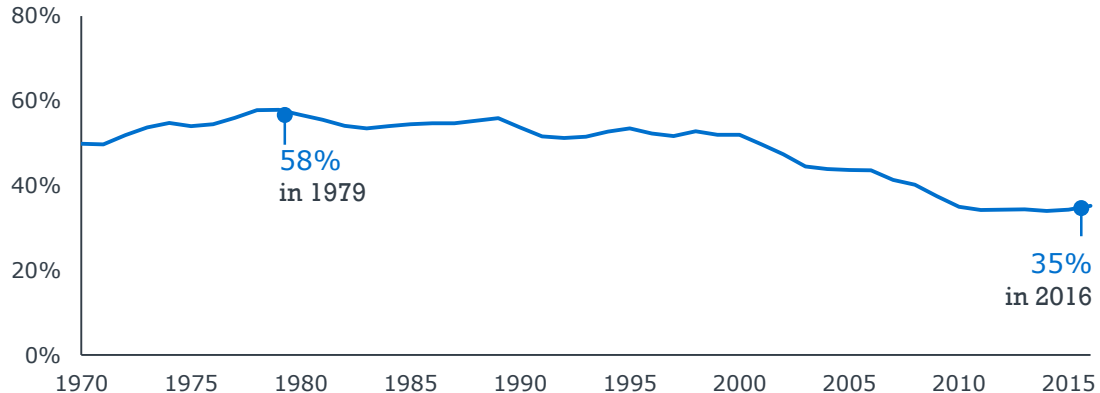
# What Today's Job Market Feels Like



# The (Professional) Experience Gap

## It's Not Your Imagination: All Teens Are Working Less...

*Labor Market Participation Rate for 16 to 19 Year Olds*



## ...Though Employers Value Previous Work Experience

83%

Likelihood that recruiters will grant an interview to entry-level youth with **part-time work experience**, despite having GPA slightly below minimum threshold

3x

Employers place **three times more weight on internship experience than GPA** when considering applicants' resumes

## A New Mandate for Districts

“We have a lot of students who have limited experience in professional settings. One of the things I frequently notice when I see them working at the drug store or elsewhere is they don't know how to address customers, they can't speak on the phone appropriately, and they can't solve simple problems on their own.

**Perhaps more so than in the past, we need to be deliberate with teaching these skills in the classroom.”**

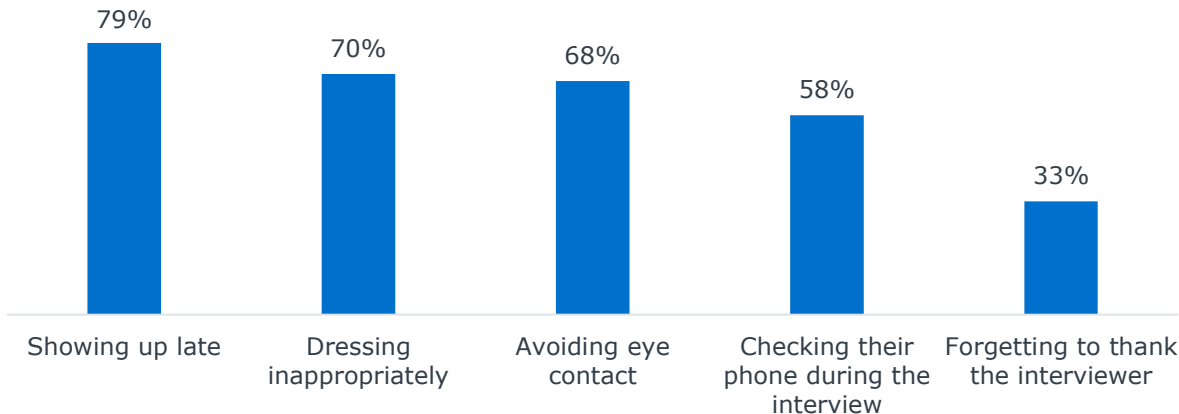
*Superintendent, Midwest School District*

# Basic Professionalism Skills Critical for Employment



## Students Unprepared for Interviewing

*Percentage of Recruiting Professionals Who Indicate the Following Interview Mistakes Occur Regularly*



## Job Navigation Skills Are Critical for Getting Hired

91%

Of employers value interview performance more than GPA

63%

Of human resource managers use oral communication as a tie-breaker for hiring

Source: "[The Soft Skills Job Seekers Need Now](#)," ICIMS Hiring Insights, 2017; Korach S, "[What employers really look for in recent college graduates](#)," *USA Today*, July 22, 2015; "[Global Assessment Trends, 2014](#)," CEB; Sullivan, J, "[Why You Can't Get a Job... Recruiting Explained by the Numbers](#)," ERE Recruiting Intelligence, May 20, 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

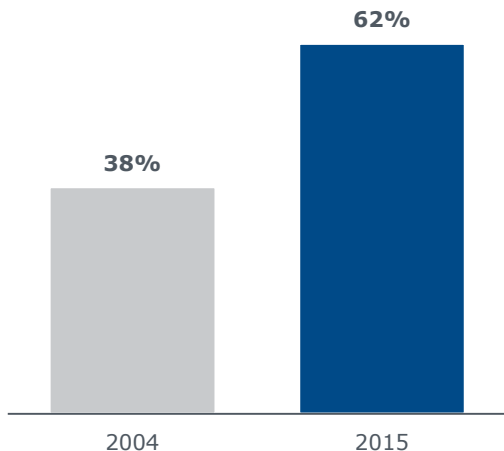


# Not Your Fault, But It Is Your Problem

## Employers and Students Believe Schools Aren't Preparing Kids For Work

### Employers Are Increasingly Disappointed in Schools

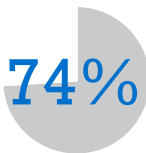
*Percentage of Employers Who Believe Schools Aren't Preparing Students for Work*



“One of the biggest gaps I hear about from employers is that students lack general professionalism [...] I’m hearing that they don’t show up on time and they don’t know how to dress appropriately. These are basic professional skills.”

*Superintendent, Midwest School District*

### ...And So Are Students



Of 18-24 year olds believe their schools failed to fully prepare them for the professional world

# Straight From the Horse's Mouth

## Employer-Delivered Workplace Skills Intensives Add Accuracy and Consistency



### Districts Bring Educational Expertise

- Develop engaging, age-appropriate individual lesson templates for teaching a variety of workplace skills
- Organize comprehensive curriculum for a large number of students

### Principals and Standards



### Employers Bring Professional Experience

- Explain the relevancy of particular skills to the workplace
- Provide context to skill lessons through real-world examples

### Authoritative Delivery

## Key Features of Employer Workplace Skills Intensives

### Integrate Into Existing Events

Students learn workplace skills during an intensive, two-week orientation

### Make it Mandatory

School requires all incoming freshmen to attend

### Minimize Employer Commitment

Employers generally teach only one topic each to minimize time commitment

### Profiled Institution:

*Cristo Rey Network, Chicago, IL*



# A Clear and Consistent Message

## Kids Pay Attention When Employers Teach Workplace Skills

### Workplace Skills Topics

#### 1 Workplace Readiness

*Business Etiquette, Communication, Collaboration, Interpersonal Relations, Complex Reasoning*

#### 2 Lifelong Learning Behaviors

*Initiative, Self-Direction, Productivity, Persistence*

#### 3 Technical Skills

*Internet Research, Correspondence, File Management, Spreadsheet Management*

### Key Benefits of Employer-Led Intensives



“The skills training gives students the necessary transferable skills that are valuable in pretty much any professional setting. Given the background of our students, these skills cannot be taken for granted. It wouldn’t be nearly as successful were it not for the collaboration between different employers and schools.”

*Dan Walsh  
SVP, Cristo Rey Network*

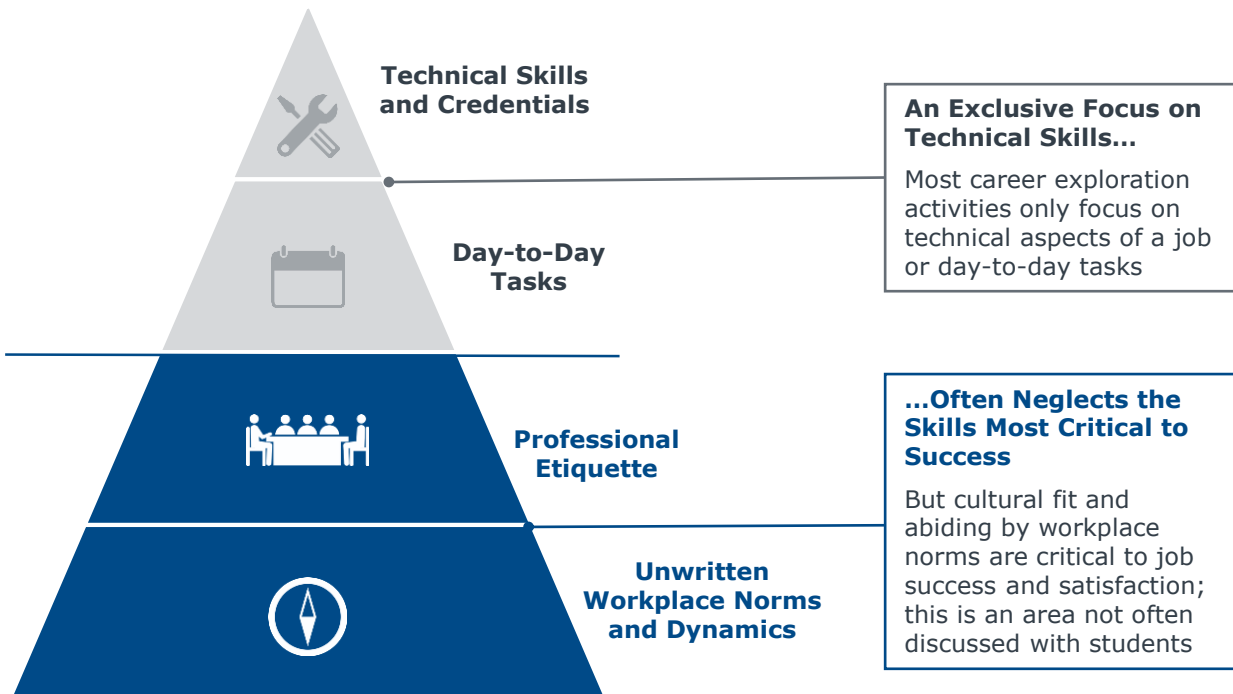


94%

Of participating employers report students met or exceeded expectations at internships following their orientation

# Hard to Discern Reality of Workplace Expectations

The Importance of Cultural Fit and Workplace Norms Are Rarely Discussed

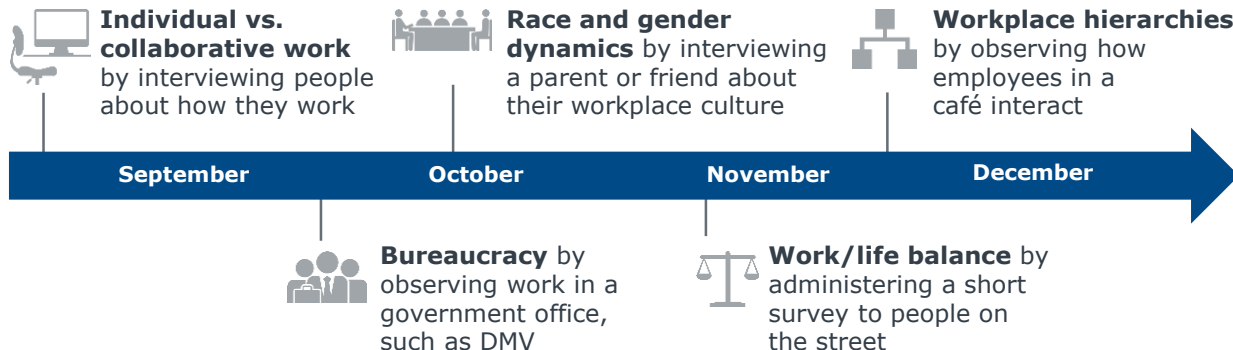


# Build Student Confidence as Ethnographers

## Field Assignments Prepare Students for Exploration in a Career of Interest

### Field Assignments Uncover Unwritten Workplace Norms and Dynamics

*Sample Field Assignments Throughout a Semester*



### Fieldwork Assignment Process

- ☒ The class collectively brainstorms questions prior to fieldwork
- ☒ Students complete assignments in pairs or small teams
- ☒ Each student completes one-page essay summarizing their findings

#### Profiled Institution:

*Guttman Community College, New York, NY*



# Explore Careers of Interest through Inquiry

## Students Apply Ethnographic Skills to Careers of Interest

### Sample Ethnographic Research Guide

#### Observation Prompts

- How is the hierarchy in the workplace demonstrated?
- Does the job mostly require collaborative or solo work?
- Do women or minorities appear to be in a position of authority?

#### Sample Questions

- How is leave dealt with in the office? Is it different for vacation vs. maternity?
- Would you describe the day as most often spent working alone or in collaboration?
- What licenses or degrees are required for the position?
- What activities about the job do you enjoy the most or the least?

### Furthering Career Awareness

In addition to observing and inquiring about **job-specific skills**, students uncover the **unwritten workplace norms and dynamics** in a field of interest

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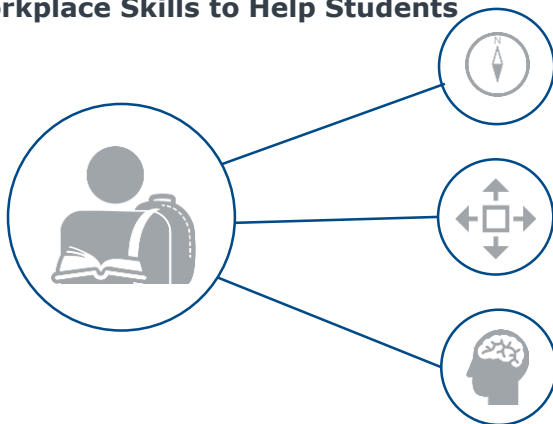
“While learning about a career field of interest, students essentially function as internal consultants. After the ethnographic research experience, more than a few employers have asked students to share their observations from their essays.”

*Mary Gatta  
Professor, Guttman Community College*

# Students Benefit When Skills Are Made Explicit

## Calling Out Lesson Objectives is a Critical Step to Skill Development

### Connect Lessons to Relevant Workplace Skills to Help Students



### Build Metacognition

Students become self-guided learners by reflecting upon and self-evaluating what they know and what they still need to learn

### Transfer Knowledge Across Contexts

Students recognize the applicability of knowledge and skills in various contexts

### Improve Knowledge Acquisition

Students are more likely to retain information if they have a particular goal or purpose in mind during a lesson

## Communicating Lesson Goals Has a Demonstrated Effect

The benefit of informing students of lesson goals is well documented by Bloom, Marzano, and others, but this practice is rarely applied to the professional and workplace skills students learn in class.



# A Light (but Critical) Lift for Teachers

## Teachers Highlight Transferable Skills Developed in Existing Curricula

Regional business leaders reported that **core competencies account for 80%** of what they looked for in employees; academic skills accounted for 20%.

### Core Sector Competencies Developed by Regional Business Leaders

- ☐ Think critically
- ☐ Listen actively
- ☐ Be flexible and adaptable
- ☐ Cultivate innovation
- ☐ Build effective teams
- ☐ Interpret and apply data
- ☐ Solve complex problems
- ☐ Speak influentially

#### Profiled Institution:

Kansas City Public Schools,  
Kansas City, KS



### Sample Syllabus – Sophomore English

Weekly Assessments – 50%

*Weekly quizzes assess student understanding of the current novel*

**Presentation – 15%**

***Students will form groups to present on a course topic***

Class Participation – 10%

*Students are expected to attend, be prepared, and actively participate*

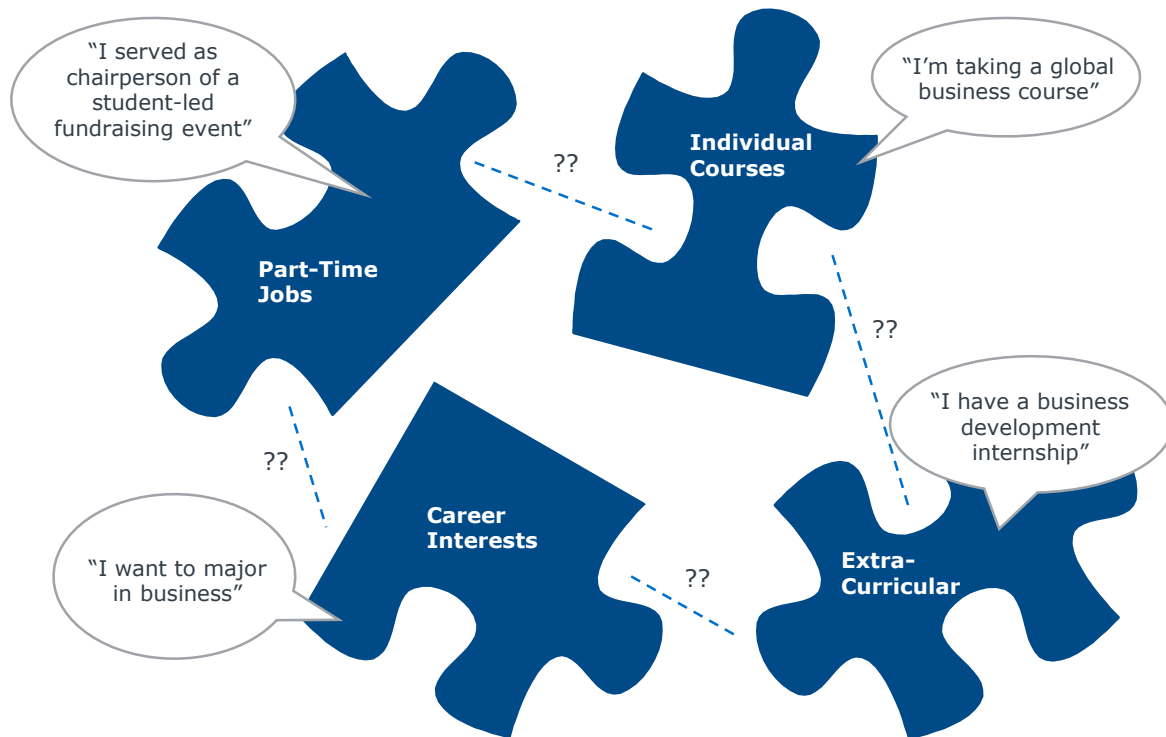
Literary Analysis Paper – 25%

*Students will write an analysis of a novel read and discussed in class*



# 'Tell Me Why You're Qualified'

Students Struggle to Articulate The Relevancy of Their Experiences to a Job



# Putting Skill Articulation to the Test

## Teachers Prompt Pitch Practice Between Class Periods

### Process Steps for Pitch Development



Students complete **an online assessment** of their career interests



The school teaches the concept of the elevator pitch and **students develop their own** in class



**Teachers ask students at random to give their pitch** in the hallway between classes and provide instant feedback throughout the school year

### Techniques for Promoting Pitches



Adults constantly ask students how their current lessons relate to their desired careers to keep pitches dynamic



The school encourages community members and others who visit the campus to ask students 'what they are working on'



Both teachers and administrators emphasize the importance of pitches by continuously asking students to articulate their interests



Teachers inform students how their class lessons prepare them for careers

#### Profiled Institution:

*Blue Valley School District, Overland Park, KS*



CENTER FOR ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

# Achieving 'Perfect Pitch'

## Students Communicate Career Relevance of Courses and Extracurriculars

### Sample Elevator Pitch

When I entered CAPS as a junior, I had not given much thought on what life would look like after high school and had certainly not contemplated future career paths. What a difference a year made!

As an outgrowth of my Global Business coursework, I had the good fortune to serve as chairperson of the yearlong Innovation Celebration project, which is a student led fundraising event. My team raised nearly \$60K for CAPS and was responsible for all aspects of the event from fundraising, to donor recognition, to day of event logistics. The task seemed daunting at first, but I quickly learned that if I applied the professional skills learned at CAPS, we could accomplish our many goals.

I am now a senior and I split my time between an amazing marketing and business development internship and project work. At CAPS I have done things that I didn't think were possible. I see myself as a leader with professional skills and a network that I will take with me as I enter Texas A&M next year to major in business.

*Hope Adams, CAPS – Global Business '16-17*

### Key Attributes of Elevator Pitches

#### Engaging

Lead with a high-level summation of an experience or one's goals to engage the audience

#### Academically Relevant

Use the pitch to link future plans with coursework

#### Result-Oriented

Include results or outcomes from activities, including any skills attained through an experience

### Rule of Thumb

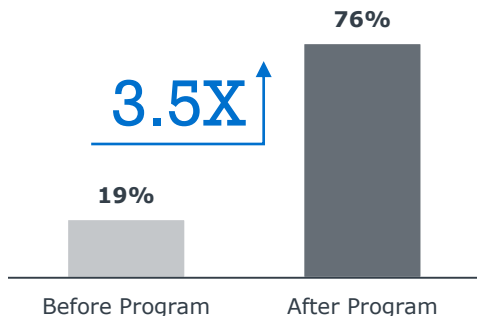


Elevator pitches should be limited to **30 seconds or less**

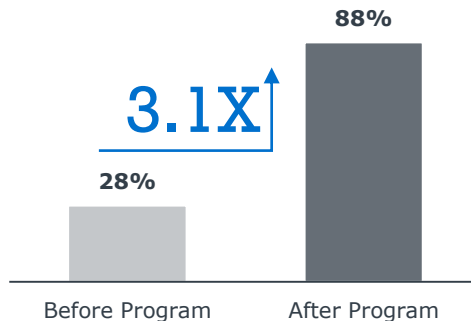
# Elevator Pitches Improve Student Confidence

## Improvement in Describing Career Interests and in Speaking with Professionals

*Percentage of Students Who Felt Confident in Effectively Giving Elevator Pitches<sup>1</sup>*



*Percentage of Students Who Felt Confident in Conversing with Business Professionals<sup>1</sup>*



“As students improve their elevator pitches over time, they develop a number of important skills and traits—communication, speaking with confidence, versatility. It also provides a forum for them to constantly refine their own career interests.”

*Corey Mohn  
Executive Director, Blue Valley School District*

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# Celebrate Articulation of Career Interests and Plans

## A Capstone Formalizes Communication and Reflection on Experiences



### Seniors Present What They've Accomplished...

#### Academic and Elective Courses

Present eight artifacts from academic courses and six from career-related courses

#### Volunteer Experiences

Discuss impact of volunteer experiences

#### Extracurricular Activities

Present three items that showcase interests, strengths, and talents



### ...And How it Impacts Their Long Term Goals

#### Post-Secondary Plans

Explain their immediate post-secondary plans, whether job-related or college-bound

#### Financial Plan

Present expected wages for entry-level jobs in their career field, as well as personal expenses and savings

#### Career Goals and Objectives

Describe their long-term career goals and how they plan on achieving them

#### Profiled Institution:

*Whitewater Unified School District,  
Whitewater, WI*



Student instructions for capstone presentations available in Appendix A, pg.26.



# Capstone Event a Significant Motivation

## Formalized Presentation Widely Seen as Benefiting Quality of Work

### Explicit Signals of Capstone Presentation's Importance



#### Length of Presentation

Students present for 15 minutes and then respond to questions for 10 minutes



#### Important Guests

Students invite parents, teachers, peers and community members to the presentations



#### Exemption from Final Exams

Seniors are exempted from final exams as the presentation is a culminating celebration of high school

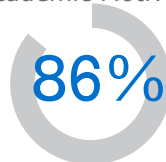


#### Certification of Completion

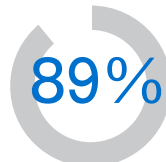
Principals award students upon completion of their presentations

### High Return on Student Performance

*Percentage of Respondents Who Believe Presentations Improve Student Academic Motivation*



2016 Graduates



Parents



Teachers

# Awards Signal What a School Values

Schools Signal Many Things as Important, But Not Workplace Excellence

## Partial List of Signals Schools Send to Increase Motivation



### Academic

- Valedictorian/ Salutatorian Designations
- Graduation Regalia
- National Honors Society
- Attendance Awards
- Honor Roll
- Student of the Month



### Athletic

- School Trophy Case
- Championship Banners
- Athlete of the Week
- Signing Day
- State-of-The-Art School Stadium
- Athletic Swag
- Excused from Classes



### Community Service

- Community Service Plaques
- Leadership Awards
- Service Learning Certificates
- Course Credit
- School Newspaper Publicity

## No Awards for Workplace Excellence



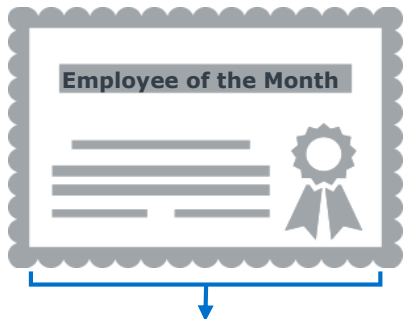
“We give a lot of awards for academics or sports and really play them up to students, but what about excelling at an internship or job? We don’t reward professional success.”

*Director of Work Study  
Midwestern School District*

# Recognizing a Student Employee of the Month

Call Out Outstanding Workplace Performance by Students at School

## Schools Recognize Outstanding Workplace Performance



- 1 Awards are determined by employer evaluation of students' workplace behavior
- 2 Award announcements occur on a monthly basis to frequently signal to students the importance of honing professional skills

### Profiled Institution:

Cristo Rey Network, Chicago, IL



CRISTO REY  
NETWORK

## Types of Awards and Recognitions



Recognition on School Website



\$15 Starbucks Gift Card



School-Wide Praise at Student Assemblies

## Signals the Importance of Workplace Success in Schools

From a school culture standpoint, having an environment of encouraging and celebrating success in the workplace shows students that while academic success is critical, workplace success is also critical.”

Dan Walsh

Senior Vice President, Cristo Rey Network



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