



# Meeting the **Career** **Readiness** Imperative

Best Practices for Scaling Career Awareness and Exposure

District Leadership  
Forum







EAB

# Meeting the **Career** **Readiness** Imperative

Best Practices for Scaling Career Awareness and Exposure

# District Leadership Forum

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# Executive Summary

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## Meeting the Career Readiness Imperative

### **Majority of Students Not Ready for the Labor Market**

**Most students do not receive the career development support they need to be successful in the labor market.** As the world of work becomes more complex, the majority (67%) of 25- to 34-year-olds across all education attainment levels face difficulty entering the job market because they lack a degree or certification that allows them to secure a living-wage job. These students could have benefited from career education, exploration, and guidance, starting in K–12.

**In reality, a large share of students make uninformed decisions about their next steps.** Correcting these mistakes at a later date is costly in terms of time and money. More than half of all high school graduates believe their school did not support them in exploring and identifying which postsecondary steps and careers would align with their interests and capabilities. Consequently, only 36% of high school graduates make postsecondary industry-specific decisions that align with their strengths and interests.

### **Lack of Support Results in Suboptimal Outcomes**

**Additionally, students who are unaware of how their learning relates to future careers face greater risk of becoming disengaged from their learning and eventually dropping out of school.** Most (81%) of high school dropouts reported that “seeing the connection between school and getting a job would have kept them in school.” This presents a huge opportunity for districts to help students make connections between their academics, the world around them, and their future goals.

**The consequences of waiting to explore and test career plans after high school are significant.** Correcting a poor decision at a later date will cost students additional time and money in college. While it is not uncommon for students to change their postsecondary program of study (sometimes more than once). This often leads to excess credit accumulation and additional time to graduate.

### **Districts Best Positioned to Set Students Up for Long-Term Career Success**

**Districts are well-positioned to propel students toward career success due to their access to all students, regardless of their eventual educational attainment levels.** The good news is that districts can provide all students with ongoing career development support without sacrificing academics or requiring additional resources. This study will outline best practices to achieve that goal.

# Executive Summary (cont.)

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## Meeting the Career Readiness Imperative

### **Increase Career Awareness and Exploration for All Students**

**Cultivate early and broad career awareness.** Students develop their career aspirations as early as late elementary to middle school, but their career interests are usually confined to a limited menu of options based on what they observe in their immediate surroundings (e.g. whom they know and who looks like them). As a result, students across all socioeconomic classes risk developing career goals that reinforce historic social patterns and expectations, regardless of their individual capabilities and interests. To counter these trends, it's important to expose students to a broader range of possibilities at a young age, when they remain impressionable.

**Increase access to career experiences.** The best way for students to refine their career aspirations early on is by gaining industry-based work experience. In reality, students have few opportunities to do this in high school. Schools either have a limited supply of industry-based work experience opportunities (e.g., work-based learning or project-based learning) or students' crowded schedules prevent them from participating. As a result, alarmingly low numbers of high school students have the chance to test their career fit and interest before making postsecondary decisions. Fortunately, there are practical ways for districts to reengineer existing structures and resources to provide all students with opportunities to test their career interest and fit by integrating academic and career learning in the classroom.

### **Aid Postsecondary Decision-Making and Successful Workplace Transitions**

**Offer personalized and frequent career decision support.** High school students today are asked to make high-stakes decisions from an overwhelming and growing number of postsecondary options. Districts' reliance on overburdened school counselors is insufficient for providing students with the support they need to make informed choices. Not only do counselors have limited time, but many also lack training in providing career advice across a broad range of industries. As a result, 62% of students rate their counselors "fair" or "poor" in helping them explore and plan for careers. To ensure students receive the quality and timely advice they need, districts must rethink how counselor time is used and reexamine traditional advising structures.

**Formally aid workplace transitions.** Employers often complain that students lack the professional etiquette and skills required to be successful in the workplace. In fact, nearly half of employers attribute their entry-level vacancies to a lack of professional characteristics among incoming candidates. Unfortunately, students have few opportunities to hone these skills before transitioning to work. Most students (74% of 18- to 24-year-olds) claim their schools failed to prepare them for the professional world. To propel students toward workplace success, districts should provide ongoing skill development opportunities within existing academic structures.





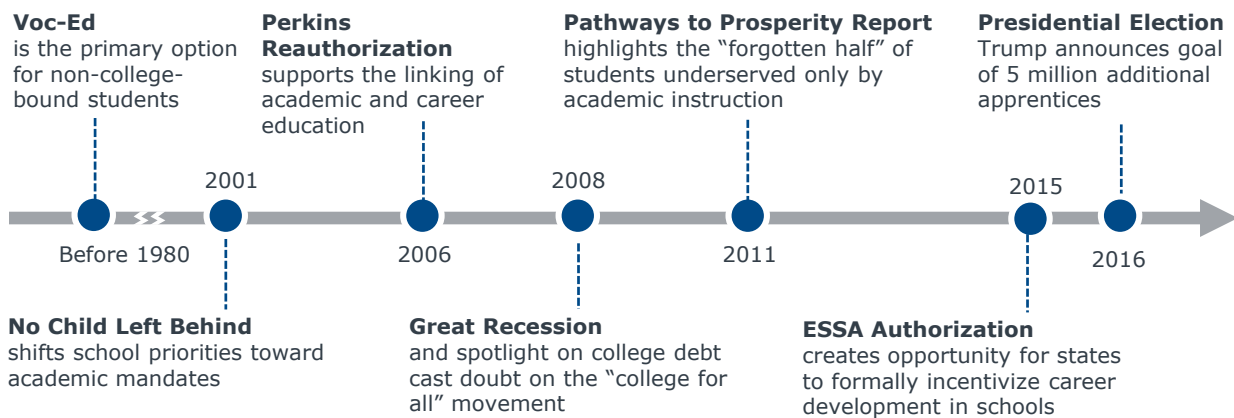
# Defining the Role of K–12 in Career Education

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INTRODUCTION

# Career Education (Re-)Enters the Spotlight

In recent years, career education has regained attention as a critical component to set students on the path toward lifelong success. Prior to the Great Recession, comprehensive career education was not a priority in the US public school system; the goal of high schools was to ensure all students attended college. Following the Recession, and in response to rising concerns about college affordability and student indebtedness, attention has shifted toward exploring approaches that emphasize a blend of college and career readiness.



## From Focus on College for All...

“The US has been moving toward a policy of universal higher education. American high schools have quietly adopted a college-for-all approach, moving away from preparing students for work.”

Educational Policy Institute, 2004

## To Blended Career Focus

“Given dismal post-secondary attainment numbers, a narrowly defined ‘college-for-all’ goal—one that does not include a much stronger focus on career oriented programs that lead to occupation credentials—seems doomed to fail.”

Harvard’s Pathways to Prosperity Program, 2011

Sources: Harvard Graduate School of Education, “[Pathways to Prosperity](#),”; Educational Policy Institute, “[College Readiness for All and The No Child Left Behind Act: Mutually Supportive Visions and Complimentary Goals](#),” EAB interviews and analysis.

# ESSA Prompts Career-Focused Indicators

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) aims to grant states more leeway in complying with federal accountability standards. The School Quality/Student Success (SQSS) indicator provides states with the discretion to determine how they will measure school quality and student success beyond traditional academic measures. To date, most states that have submitted plans have selected career-focused measures. Advocates for enhanced career education view this as an opportunity for states to place greater emphasis on that area.



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants greater leeway to states in complying with federal accountability standards

## School Quality/Student Success (SQSS) Indicator Requirements

- Allows for meaningful school performance differentiation
- Must be valid and reliable
- Must be used within each grade span
- Must be comparable and applicable statewide
- Must be measured and reported annually for all students

"States can use...[SQSS] to set and execute a vision that provides students with multiple, meaningful opportunities to...build awareness of career opportunities, provide real-world instruction and lead to credentials with labor market value."

Advance CTE, 2017

## ESSA Career-Focused Plans Across States

- 11 Have a "college and career readiness" measure
- 8 Incentivize dual enrollment
- 8 Incentivize credential attainment
- 4 Incentivize CTE course work
- 4 Incentivize work-based learning

# Rising Federal Commitments With Minimal Support

The Trump Administration has signaled support for a renewed focus on career education, most notably by setting a goal to create five million new apprenticeships across the United States. That rhetoric however, has not been matched by an increased commitment of funds.

## Lots of Talk Around the Urgency for Career Education



To strengthen our economy, we need a skilled and educated workforce. This administration is committed to supporting and highlighting career and technical education.

Betsy DeVos, US Secretary of Education



## Federal Promises to Support Career Education



Goal to have 5M new apprentices in the U.S.



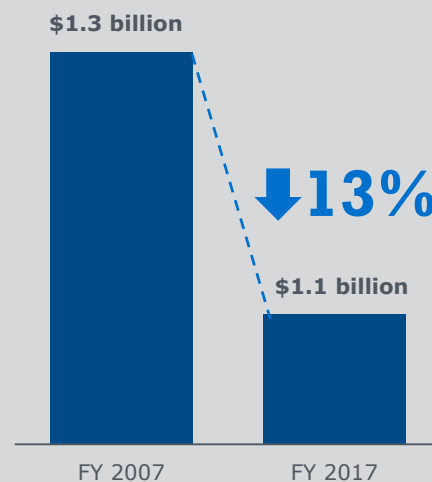
Stated support for improving CTE programs across K-12 public schools



Stated support for increasing CTE dual enrollment programs

## Yet Perkins Funding Lags Behind Political Will

*Perkins Federal Investment, FY 2007 and FY 2017*



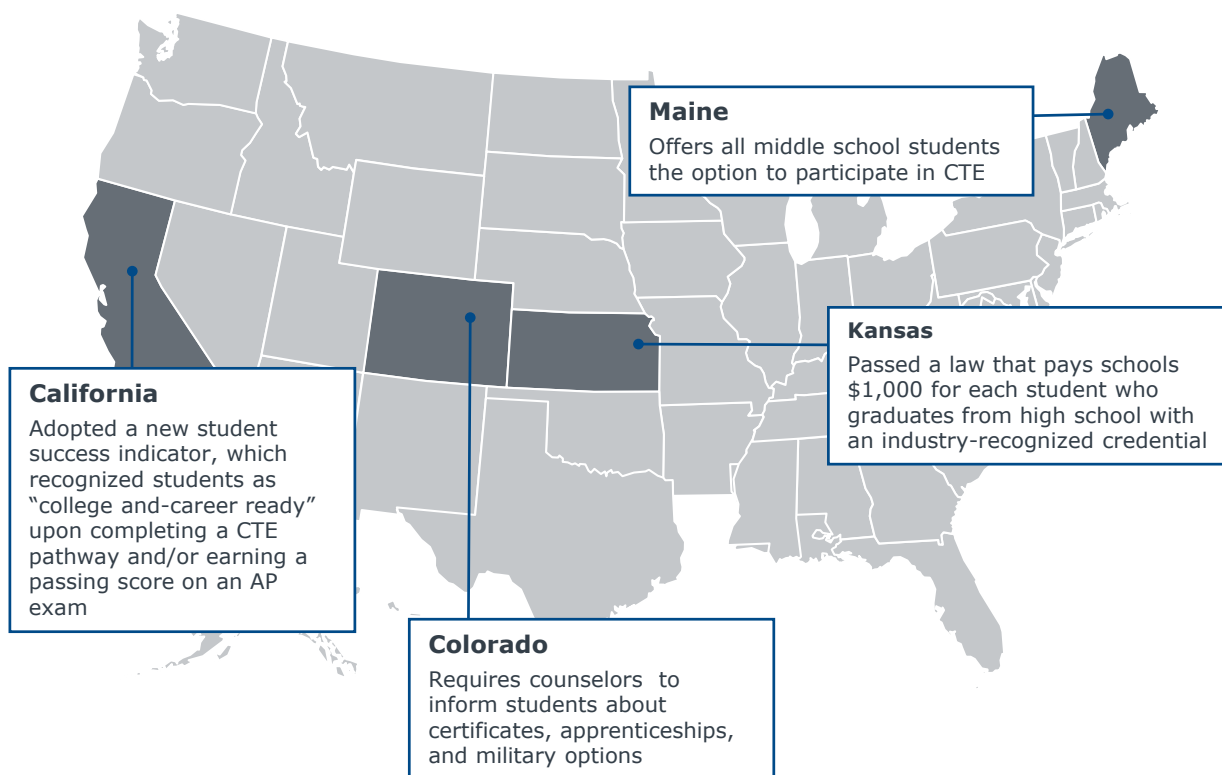
In Spring, 2017, the White House proposed \$168M for FY18 Perkins funding, which would have been a 15% cut from FY17. Although Congress proposed a bill to maintain FY18 Perkins funding at \$1.1 billion in fall 2017, that number represents a 13% decline over the past decade.

Source: Association for Career and Technical Education, "[Trump Administration CTE Comments](#)"; U.S. Department of Education, "[National Assessment of Career and Technical Education](#)"; Advance CTE, "[Perkins State Grant Federal Investment: Fiscal Years 2004-2017](#)"; EAB interviews and analysis.



# States Embrace Career Education Innovation

While federal attention to career education has been inconsistent, many states have been active in promoting career education through a variety of mandates and programs. Kansas incentivizes students to earn industry-recognized credentials by paying schools \$1,000 for each student who earns a credential. Colorado mandates that school counselors inform students about certificate, apprenticeships, and military options.



Sources: Education Week, "[Growing Number of States Embrace Career Education](#)"; ACTE, "[State Profiles](#)"; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Numerous Pilots but Questionable Value

## Many Career-Focused Initiatives Remain Limited in Proven Impact and Scale

States' efforts to provide career preparation that is both valuable and widely accessible to students remains a challenge. Florida's Career and Professional Education Act provided incentives for schools to push students to earn credentials in addition to a diploma. Subsequent studies revealed that 60% of industry certifications awarded were the ones cheapest to offer and scale but had minimal market value (e.g., certifications in Adobe and Microsoft products). Meanwhile, schools are not actively promoting certifications in high-needs areas, where the cost of educating students is much higher.



### Industry Certification Incentives

Florida's Career and Professional Education Act (CAPE) allows schools to receive additional funding based on students earning an industry credential

#### ✘ Easy-to-Attain Certifications, Low Market Value

Cost pressures mean that schools are not promoting higher-valued certifications in manufacturing, health, or construction

**60%** Of certifications are for Adobe or Microsoft products



### Apprenticeships

Colorado recently launched a statewide drive to create 20,000 apprenticeships over the next ten years

#### ✘ High Cost, Low Completion

- Cost averages range from \$45k to \$85k per apprentice
- Despite a 40% growth in the number of apprentices since 2011, the number of individuals completing apprenticeships declined by 11%

*Can we provide career preparation that is both valuable **and** widely accessible to all students?*

States such as Colorado that are looking to expand apprenticeships find that not only is the cost of these intensive programs high, but also, the long-term salary outcomes and promise for sustained career growth beyond the first three to five years are questionable.

Sources: ["CAPE Industry Certification K-12 Data Summary Reports,"](#) Florida Department of Education; Peralta K, ["Apprenticeships Could Be Gateway to Middle Class,"](#) U.S. News & World Report, January 12, 2015; [Registered Apprenticeship National Results,](#) U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Middle Skills Gap Adds to Pressure

## Employers Struggling to Fill Middle Skills Jobs

Improving the quality of career education is critical to addressing the middle skills gap that persists in today's economy. Over 40% of employers find it difficult to recruit people with the skills they need, resulting in entry-level vacancies. This is particularly true for skilled trades, sales representatives, technicians, machine operators, and IT Personnel. Jobs in these fields often require some postsecondary credential short of a bachelor's degree. A study by the National Governors Association from 2014 suggests that failing to address this gap will stunt the growth of the US economy.

### Talent Shortages on the Rise

Percentage of Employers Reporting Talent Shortages



Percentage of US employers reporting talent shortages in 2016, an increase from 31% of employers in 2010

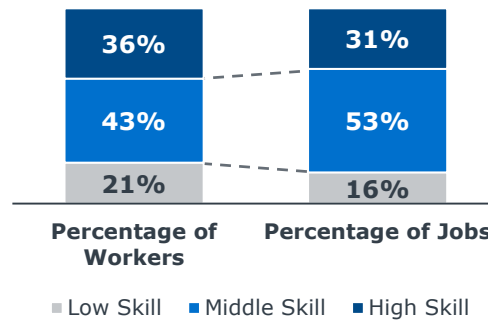


### Most Difficult Jobs to Fill

- Skilled Trades
- Technicians
- Sales Representatives
- Machine Operators
- IT Personnel

### Middle Skills Area of Highest Unmet Demand

Percentage of Workers and Jobs by Skill Level in 2015



### A Real Impact on the US Economy

**\$538B**

Loss to US economy by 2030 resulting from projected postsecondary degree shortfall

Sources: "2016-2017 Talent Shortage Survey," ManpowerGroup, 2017; "United States' Forgotten Middle," National Skills Coalition, 2015; National Governors Association, "America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs," 2014; EAB interviews and analysis.

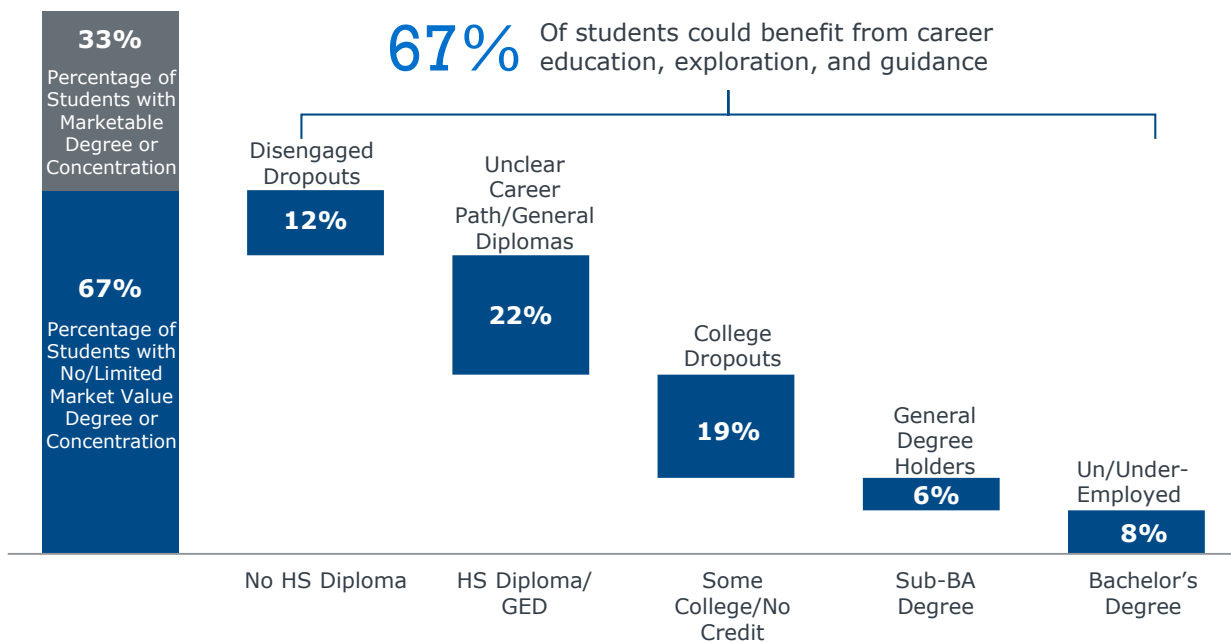
# Majority of Students Not Ready for the Labor Market

## Districts Best Positioned to Set Students Up for Long-Term Career Success

According to EAB’s analysis of US Census data, the majority (67%) of 25- to 34-year-olds across all levels of educational attainment levels face difficulty entering the job market. This group includes: high school dropouts, high school diploma holders without an additional industry-recognized credential, post-secondary students who never earn a degree, students who earn a nonspecialized associate degree that has little market value, or bachelor’s degree holders who are un/underemployed.

### Large Share of Students Across Education Attainment Levels Face Difficulty Entering the Labor Market

*EAB Analysis of US Census Data on 25-to 34-Year-Olds’ Education and Employment Outcomes*



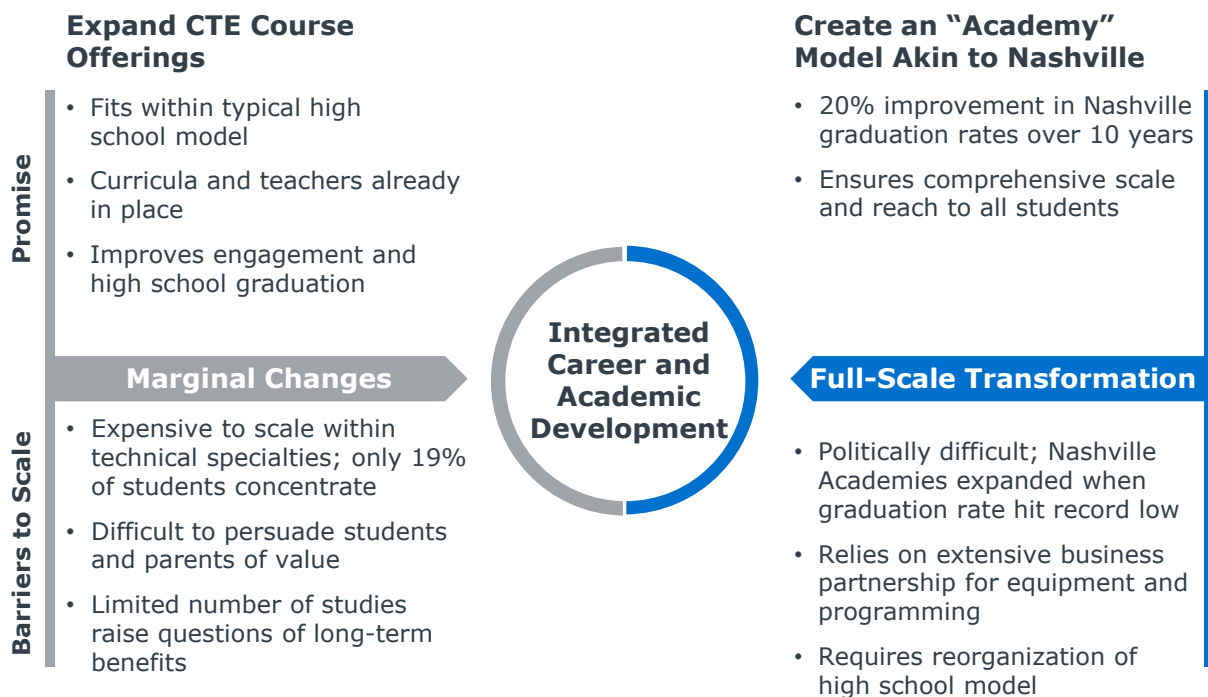
This unfortunate reality suggests that there is a significant need at the K–12 level to provide students with much greater career education, exploration, and guidance than what they are currently receiving. While the imperative is clearest for those students who will not go on to postsecondary education, even students who go on to college would benefit from greater career preparation in order to make better, more informed decisions.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015; "Education Attainment in the United States, Population Characteristics"; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Capturing the Best of Both Worlds

## Finding the Middle Ground in Diverse Approaches to Career Education

The traditional approach to career education has been through Career and Technical Education (CTE). Many CTE programs have proved to be successful in providing career education for a small number of students, but the programs are costly to scale, and participation is often limited due to persistent stigma associated with vocational education. A smaller number of districts (most notably Nashville, Tennessee) have adopted an “academy model.” However, this approach requires a full-scale transformation of a district’s organization and curriculum, which may be prohibitively difficult both financially and politically.



This study endeavors to provide districts with an approach that is broad in reach like the academy model but less costly to provide than CTE programming. The key is to integrate academic and career development into a continuous, coordinated approach that relies on academic enrichment and in-school services. This study will outline best practices to achieve that goal.

# The New Rules of CTE

For districts looking to modernize their CTE course offerings, districts should begin by reviewing labor market needs and the employment outcomes of different learning pathways. EAB is able to support members with state-specific labor market demand profiles, which provides information on salaries, qualification requirements, and details on employment rates. In addition, the Industry Futures Series offers members insights on industry trends and labor market projections.

## Principles of High-Quality CTE Programs

*Aligns to High-Demand Sectors*



Programs prepare students for careers in industries likely to offer family-sustaining wages

*Includes Various Educational Off-Ramps*



Program design offers baccalaureate, as well as sub-baccalaureate, off-ramps into the workforce

*Incorporates Rigorous Academic and Employability Goals*



Curriculum incorporates lessons on academic subjects and provides training for specific jobs



## How EAB Can Help



**State-Specific Labor Market Demand Profiles**



**Industry Futures Series**



**Expert Support**

# Meeting the Career Readiness Imperative

## Best Practices for Scaling Career Awareness and Exposure

The core findings of EAB’s research are organized around the following four chapters that detail relevant best practices. The first chapter is focused on cultivating early and broad career awareness so that all students can expand and reflect on their career interests. The second chapter examines practical strategies for allowing students to test their interests and fit in a low-stakes environment. The third chapter is dedicated to expanding and improving the quality of post-secondary career guidance, without requiring additional staff. The final chapter examines ways districts can develop the professional skills students’ need to enter the workforce.

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

2

**Lower Access Barriers to Career Experiences**



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

3

**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

This study offers cost-effective strategies that progressive institutions are deploying to integrate opportunities for all students to explore and prepare for careers within an academic environment. The ideas and practices profiled in this publication are the result of extensive work with superintendents, career center directors, staff members, and experts across the country.







# Cultivate Early and Broad Career Awareness

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CHAPTER

1

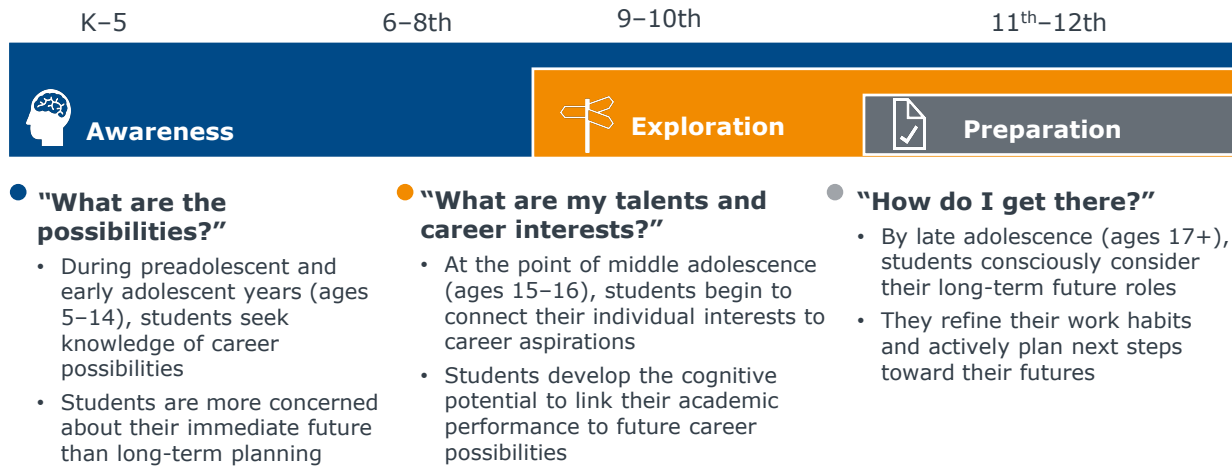
- Practice 1: Middle School Expo: Worlds of Work
- Practice 2: Pathways Essentials
- Practice 3: Pathways Teacher Development Lessons
- Practice 4: Structured Career Reflection

# Critical Time for Career Identity Development

According to developmental psychologists, students form their career identities and observe the range of career opportunities available to them even within the primary grades of elementary school. An all-too-common question that students are asked from an early age is, "What would you like to be when you grow up?" Most students—regardless of age—will form an answer based on insufficient information.

## Students' Career Awareness Begins at an Early Age

*Career Development Continuum by Grade Level*



## Large Share of Students Make Uninformed Career Choices

**91%** Of 13-to 17-year olds believe they know what career they want to pursue

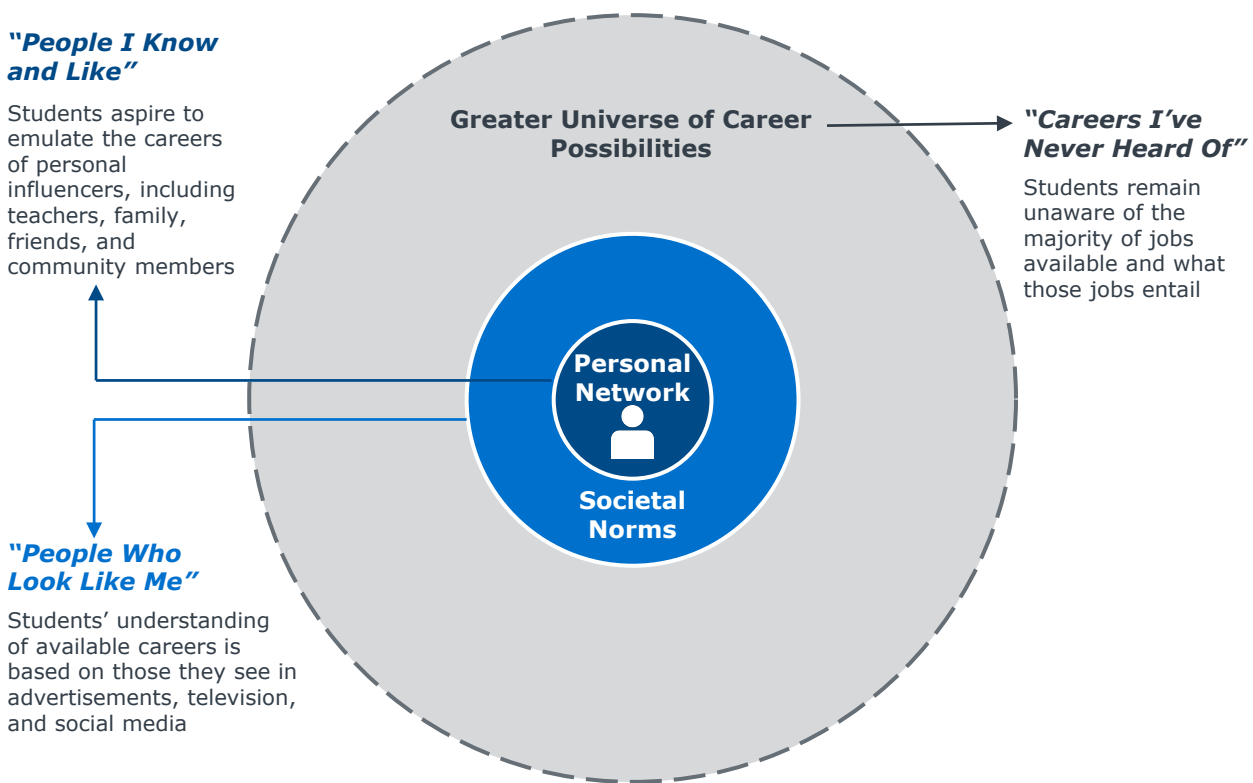
**36%** Of high school graduates chose majors that fit their strengths and interests

Sources: Erikson E, "Erikson Psychosocial Development Stages," (1963); Spano S, "Stages of Adolescent Development," Cornell University, (2004); Survey of 13-17 Year Olds, Junior Achievement USA & EY (2017); Sheehy K, "[Study: High School Grads Choosing Wrong College Majors](#)," *U.S. News & World Report*; EAB interviews and analysis.

# A Limited View of the World of Work

## Students' Career Goals Are Limited to What They See and Know

Students tend to form their career identities within the confines of the limited possibilities that they see most commonly. Students' sense of career options are heavily influenced by those represented in their *personal network*, including their family and community members. Students are also influenced by societal norms, such as the careers they see in advertisements and television. As a result, they are largely unaware of the greater universe of career possibilities that could lead to two equally important outcomes: (1) earning family-sustaining wages and (2) experiencing overall job satisfaction.



Sources: Helwig A, "A Ten-Year Longitudinal Study of the Career Development of Students," *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 82, no. 1 (2004); EAB interviews and analysis.

# The Potential Consequences of a Limited Outlook

## The Risk of Reinforcing Historic Patterns and Expectations

Problems arise when students' limited awareness of career possibilities leads them to select poor-fit careers. This trend is pervasive across social groups. For example, students from high-income families—regardless of their strengths and interests—may be pressured to pursue jobs in high-paying demanding industries, such as medicine, engineering, or law. Similarly, students in rural regions are more likely to seek employment in agricultural fields.



### High-Achieving Students Often Pressured into Demanding Careers

- Medicine, computer science, engineering, and law are among the most popular major choices for high school students scoring high on the ACT
- But these majors are typically chosen without knowledge of what they require

“I really don't enjoy my science classes, but my parents tell me all the time that I need to be a doctor. So I guess that's what I'll be studying in college.”



### Students in Rural Regions Are Exposed to Few Alternatives

- Geographic disparity in local labor markets can play a more significant role in students' upward economic mobility than school quality
- These students have fewer opportunities to witness a diverse number of careers

“Everyone in my town is involved in agriculture. My dad owns a dairy farm, and I've always done a good job helping him run it.”

<30%

Of all STEM-related jobs are filled by women

11%

Of all jobs in the finance industry are filled by employees of Hispanic ethnicity

7%

Of all jobs in the computer science industry are filled by African-Americans



Students from disadvantaged social groups—including girls and minorities—are at greater risk for entering lower-paid careers and disregarding their potential to excel in a higher-paying field. To counter these trends, it is important to expose students to a broader range of possibilities at a young age, when they remain impressionable.

Sources: "The Condition of College & Career Readiness," ACT (2017); Cohen M, "[Education Isn't the Key to a Good Income](#)," *The Atlantic*; "Women in STEM: A Gender Gap to Innovation," Economics & Statistics Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce (2011); "Hispanics & Latinos in Industries and Occupations," Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015; Mason K, "[Computer Science's Diversity Gap Starts Early](#)," *PBS*; EAB interviews & analysis.

# Career Exposure Takes Many Forms

## No Shortage of School-Sponsored Awareness-Building Activities

Many schools have already adopted a number of initiatives to expose students to a variety of careers. These initiatives range from providing job-shadowing opportunities to hosting career fairs. While these efforts do help expose students to more careers, they tend to be one-time or episodic events. For instance, although students may engage in online strengths assessment, many of them receive little to no follow-through support in learning about the full range of career options that would align with their strengths and interests.

- Job Shadowing
  - Bring Your Child to Work Day
  - Career Aspiration “Show and Tell”
  - Online Career Planning Tools
  - Career Day
  - Virtual Workplace Videos
  - Career Clusters Brochures
  - Strengths Assessments
- Employer Presentations
  - Career Aptitude Assessments
  - Online Labor Market Self-Navigation
  - Work-Based Classroom Projects
  - Field Trips to Local Employers
  - Career 101 Elective
- Industry-Specific After-School Clubs
  - Bring Your Parent to School Day
  - Career Classroom Lectures
  - Job Fairs
  - Career-Based Research Projects
  - Guest Speakers

### Awareness Should Broaden Perspectives, Not Limit Them

“When you ask freshmen what they want to be it’s usually a doctor, lawyer, teacher, or professional athlete. **They know very little about the hundreds of millions of jobs that are out there.** We want to connect them to their passion and expose them to more than what they see within their household and community.”

*Principal  
Junior High School, Midwest School District*

# Career Fairs a Hit or Miss Investment

## Traditional Career Fairs Too Often Fail to Activate New Interests

High school and middle school career fairs are some of the most common district initiatives to enhance students' career awareness. Career fairs allow students to meet with multiple representatives of various careers in a short amount of time. Unfortunately, many young students receive little value from traditional career fairs, despite the time and resources that go into implementing them. Students not only report feeling bored at these events, but many also leave without a clear sense of the day-to-day tasks associated with different jobs or how their classroom learning relates.

### Status Quo Career Fairs Underserve Students



#### Too Much Employer Talk

Students are bored by long lectures from guest speakers



#### Surface-Level Career Information

Students learn little about what the job entails



#### No Connection to Classroom Learning

Students do not see the connection between their academics and specific careers



### Meanwhile, Kids Default to Being Interested in What They Know

"7th graders in Virginia are required by the state to make career plans, but **they aren't familiar with many careers other than the ones in their households and the ones visible in their society.**"

*Jeremy Aldrich  
CTE Director  
Harrisonburg City Public Schools*

# Less Talking, More Doing

## Integrate Hands-On Simulations into Middle School Career Fairs


To enhance the value of career fairs, **Harrisonburg City Public Schools** integrated hands-on career simulations with short employer presentations. Rather than have students passively wander around booths listening to employers explain their careers, students spend more time actively engaging in hands-on career simulations.

### Integrated Career Simulations

*Student-Led Projects Deepen Career Awareness and Engagement*

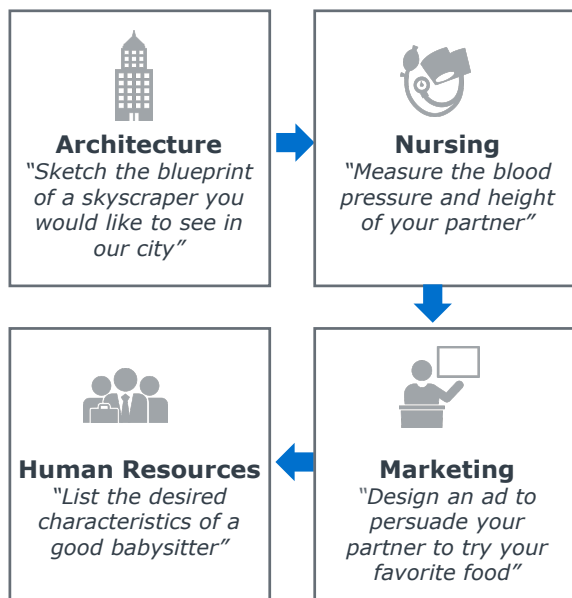
- **Short Employer Presentations**  
Employers spend a maximum of 5 minutes introducing the career, related job statistics, and skill and education requirements
- **Majority of Time Spent on Student-Led Career Simulations**  
Teams of 8–10 students spend 15–20 minutes working on job-specific activities to test their interests and fit
- **District-Vetted, Age-Appropriate Activities**  
District coordinator shares sample activities with employer volunteers to inspire career simulation projects; employers submit a summary of their simulations for final approval

**Profiled Institution:**  
Harrisonburg City Public Schools,  
Harrisonburg, VA



### Rapid-Cycle, Student-Led Activities

*Sample of Middle School Career Simulations*



During the "Worlds of Work Expo," each employer presentation is limited to a maximum of 5 minutes, which allows students to spend 15–20 minutes engaging in interactive job-specific activities that are designed to resemble the day-to-day tasks of the career at hand. To ensure all simulations are age-appropriate and meaningful, a coordinator from the district disseminates a list of sample career simulations to help employers develop student-led simulations. The coordinator then carefully reviews each simulation prior to the expo to ensure that it is appropriate for students. The 3-hour expo allows students to engage in work simulations for eight different potential jobs.

# Expanding Horizons for All Students

## Hands-On Simulations Increase Student Engagement and Awareness

According to district-wide surveys, students from Harrisonburg City Public Schools not only enjoy the Worlds of Work Expo, but they also find the experience to be particularly valuable in enhancing their career awareness. Nearly all participants reported discovering brand-new career options. Additionally, 93% of participants left the expo with a solid understanding of the day-to-day tasks associated with each career. Finally, 90% of participants were able to connect these careers with their own academic courses, thus bringing an added level of relevance to the classroom.

### Survey Reveals Significant Impact on Students

Percentage of Participating Middle School Students Who Agreed with the Following Statements

97%

Learned about new careers they did not know existed

93%

Gained awareness of the day-to-day tasks and skills related to specific careers

90%

Identified connections between career-specific skills and academic course work



### Worlds of Work Expo Makes Learning About Careers Fun

“Students were bored during middle school career fairs and didn’t get much out of them. We started the Worlds of Work Expo and made the fairs more hands-on. **Students are much more engaged and excited about the event, and they seemed to learn a lot.** We are now discussing implementing a similar hands-on experience in our high school.”

Jeremy Aldrich  
CTE Director  
Harrisonburg City Public Schools

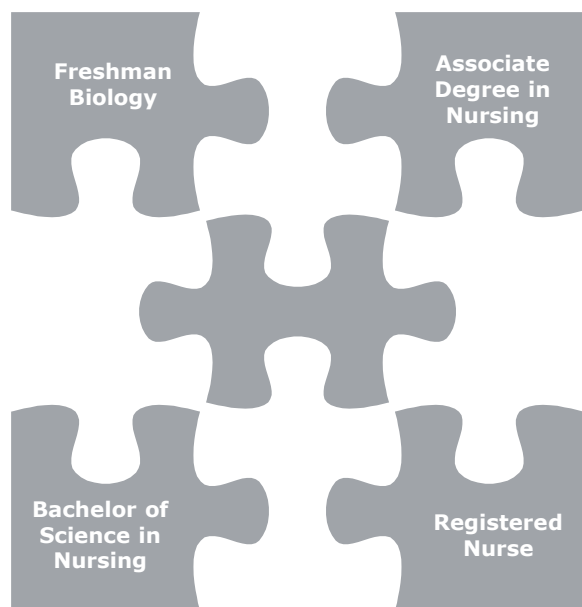


# Kids Select Careers But Miss Connections






## Students Rarely Receive Comprehensive Information on Career Pathways

Career awareness extends beyond knowing the full range of career possibilities and includes knowing the education pathways and employment trends associated with different careers. Career pathways have been well established since 2001, but communicating them effectively to students has been a challenge. Without a solid understanding of the skills and education requirements needed to pursue various careers, many students leave high school unaware of critical steps that could help them plan for their future and achieve their career goals.

### Academic Planning Absent Career Goals...



### ...Can Yield Costly Missing Process Steps and Requirements

-  Classes Aligned with Career Goals
-  Minimum Degree-Attainment Levels
-  Entrance Exam Requirements
-  Best Local Educational Providers
-  Accurate Salary Predictions
-  High-Growth Industries


While there is an abundance of employment and salary data—from state-level resources to national labor market databases—districts often struggle to find ways to effectively share large quantities of information in an age-appropriate and digestible manner.

# Pathways Communication Is an Essential Step

## Students Must See How High School Courses Connect to Future Outcomes

**Denver Public Schools** and **Appoquinimink School Districts** have created exemplar pathway maps/pamphlets geared toward students and families. These examples not only succinctly map out the sequences of courses necessary to enter various industries, but they also include relevant and up-to-date career information for each industry.


**Profiled Institution:**  
*Denver Public Schools, Denver, CO*

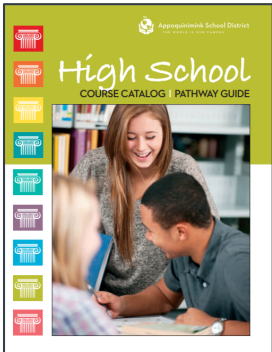




-  **Salary Estimates Based on Education**  
Earnings within a career field highlighted for various educational off-ramps
-  **Career-Relevant Master Schedules**  
Course selection based not only on career cluster but also specific careers
-  **Certification Options**  
Certifications and industry credentials offered by the district and any associated prerequisites
-  **Postsecondary Options and Requirements** Information on relevant degree programs at local postsecondary institutions

 Denver Public Schools Pathway Maps available in Appendix, pg.80.

**Profiled Institution:**  
*Appoquinimink School District, Odessa, DE*





-  **Beyond CTE**  
Pathways for humanities and social science courses—not just CTE disciplines
-  **Convenient Location**  
Pathways outlined in the high school course catalog





In addition to offering basic salary and academic pathway information, Denver Public Schools includes an impressive list of certification options for each industry and specifically highlights certification programs offered at the district level.


[Appoquinimink’s pathways pamphlet](#) has two valuable components. First, it integrates career pathways related to general education courses (including humanities, social science). This is particularly beneficial for students interested in industries outside of the traditional CTE clusters, including political science and creative writing. Second, it organizes high school courses by relevant pathways rather than the department in which they are taught.

# Pathways-Based Professional Development


## Ensure Quality Pathways Communication Through Teacher Development


Teachers are best positioned to inform students about career pathway options given their direct access to students. However, they are often unfamiliar with career pathways themselves and are unable to effectively communicate these options to students. As a result, students could leave a CTE course without knowing the multitude of potential careers related to the industry. To ensure students receive timely information on careers and education requirements, **Township High School District 214** provides pathways-based professional development training and materials for CTE teachers.

<b>D214 Internal University: Pathways and Careers Course</b>			<b>Communicate Pathway Information</b> The district facilitates an internal development course on career pathways to enhance teacher knowledge of career information
Day 1	Introduction to Career Pathways		
Day 2	Pathway Research Presentations		<b>Enhance Teacher Knowledge</b> Teachers research a career cluster most closely aligned with their courses and present their findings to the wider class
Day 3	Field Experience Reflections		
Day 4	Discussion on Curriculum Projects		<b>Provide Teacher Exposure</b> Teachers share “field experience” gained from attending a recent, relevant, career-related event in their community
Day 5	Curriculum Presentations		<b>Ensure Lesson Quality and Consistency</b> Teachers present a full-class lesson on their pathway to colleagues and district administrators, which they are advised to then teach in orientation CTE courses

Course syllabus and assignments available in Appendix, pg.82. 

**Profiled Institution:**  
Township High School District 214,  
Arlington Heights, IL



**45%** 

Increase in students who self-identified with a career cluster of interest between 2015 and 2017

At the start of the school year, the district offers a professional development course to educate CTE teachers on career pathways related to their courses. Not only do CTE teachers learn about these pathways, but they are also encouraged to participate in at least one career-related event in the community to enhance their understanding of on-the-job skills.

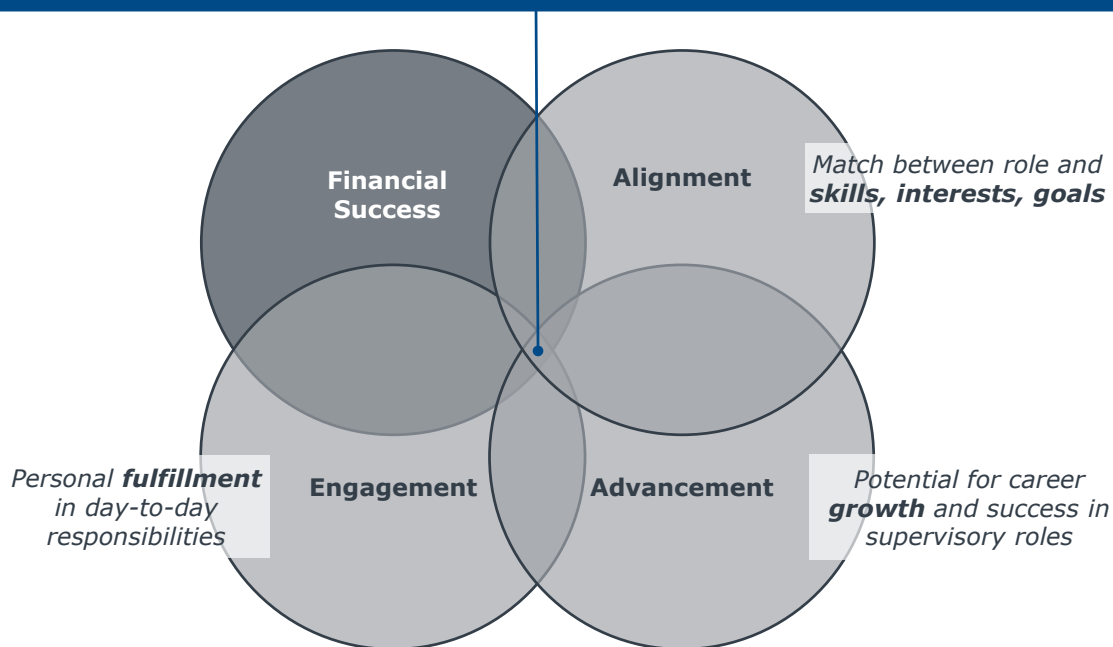
Developing CTE teachers’ awareness of career pathways allows them to explicitly teach students about career pathways—including careers, education pathways, and labor market trends—during class. This concerted effort ultimately led to a 45% increase in the share of students who self-identified a career cluster within two years.

# Career Success Beyond Salary

## Emphasizing Alignment, Engagement, and Advancement in Outcomes

It is critically important for students to make career choices informed by salary and employment data, but those are just two factors that contribute to career success. Long-term career success is also the result of selecting a career path that will provide fulfillment and align with a student's strengths and skills.

**Career success** encompasses a family-sustaining wage, a fit between one's talents and day-to-day tasks, a feeling of responsibility, and the opportunity to advance within the career field.



Understanding where one's career goals and personal interests align requires ongoing reflection and a deeper understanding of one's strengths. However, students are rarely provided the time or means to reflect upon how their interests and skills align with their career options. One study found that 67% of young professionals claimed to have arrived at their current job by mere chance, as opposed to careful planning and reflection.





Sources: Alton J, "How Millennials Are Reshaping What's Important in Corporate Culture," *Forbes*; Rigoni B, Adkins A, "What Millennials Want from a New Job," *Harvard Business Review*, [hbr.org/2016/05/what-millennials-want-from-a-new-job](http://hbr.org/2016/05/what-millennials-want-from-a-new-job); EAB interviews and analysis.

# A Home for Reflection

## Career Reflection Clarifies Student Goals and Career Knowledge

Offering students opportunities to cultivate self-awareness and reflection skills is critical to their career development and does not necessarily require an overhaul of existing school systems. **Whitewater Unified School District** provides all of its students opportunities to reflect on their career goals by integrating career reflection time into existing homeroom periods. Rather than interfering with academic requirements or utilizing additional staff, the district allocates one homeroom period a week for students to engage in ongoing, self-directed career learning.

### Students Engage in Ongoing, Self-Directed Career Learning

-  Grade-specific career reflection prompts broaden awareness and facilitate thoughtful career planning
-  Personal career journals allow students to track progression of goal formation
-  Self-directed research helps students build an archive of career information relevant to their goals
-  Final career presentations foster student articulation of strengths, interests, and postsecondary plans

#### Profiled Institution:

Whitewater Unified School District  
Whitewater, WI



### Leveled Career Prompts

*Sample Grade-Specific Reflection Themes*

- 9th** **Self-Awareness**  
*What do I excel at and enjoy?*
- 10th** **Broad Career Awareness**  
*Which careers inspire me?*
- 11th** **Defined Career Interests**  
*Which careers are most aligned with my strengths and interests?*
- 12th** **Postsecondary Preparation**  
*What do I need to do after high school to accomplish my career goals?*

To ensure that student reflection time is meaningful, all homeroom teachers receive grade-specific career prompts and activities designed to allow students to deepen their career knowledge, refine career goals, and engage in thoughtful career planning. Ultimately, these activities aim to cultivate students' self-navigation skills and promote personalized career discovery.

# Increased Career-Focused Time Across the District

## Integrate Career Reflection into Existing Structures

In order to implement structured homeroom career reflection across the district, Whitewater tackled three major hurdles. First, they had to find time during the school day to reach all students. As a solution, the district identified homeroom period as a time that could be used for career reflection activities. Second, Whitewater school district had to engage teachers in the process. To do so, the district gave teachers ownership by assembling a volunteer-based leadership task force in charge of developing grade-specific career reflection prompts.



### Elevate Underutilized Homeroom Time

- Insert career reflection into a 20-minute homeroom period one day each week
- Ensure continuity of students and teachers in the same homeroom to foster a community of support



### Assemble a Volunteer-Based Task Force

- Recruit a leadership task force of teachers and administrators to collaborate on developing grade-specific career reflection prompts and activities



### Ease Implementation for Teachers

- Disseminate grade-specific career prompts to homeroom teachers across the district to ensure easy, but high quality integration

Sample Career Reflection Prompts available in Appendix, pg.85.



Finally, the district had to ensure that career reflection time remained meaningful for all students, without requiring additional resources. To accomplish this, Whitewater disseminated grade-specific career prompts and activities to ensure standardized, high-quality integration. These career activities and prompts were designed to be student-directed, which reduced the need for significant teacher training.

# A High-Return Activity

## Intentional Reflection Yields Career Confidence and Higher Graduation Rates

As a result, Whitewater students are spending significantly more time on research and reflecting on careers than most students. Additionally, the district has witnessed not only a measurable impact on students' confidence and clarity around their career selection but also a reduction in high school dropout rates. While it is challenging to prove that homeroom career reflection improves student retention, district administrators suspect that students are less likely to drop out when they have a newfound motivation to persist in high school and work toward their longer-term goals.

### Significant Time Spent on Individualized Reflection...

55

Estimated number of hours each high school student spends on structured and personalized career reflection

### ...Leads to Career Clarity and Confidence

Survey of 2016 Whitewater High School Graduates

92%

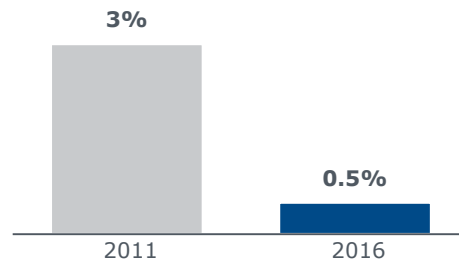
Of students felt confident in identifying careers that best align with their strengths and interests

97%

Of students felt confident in a ability to be successful in a chosen career path

### Increased Career Reflection Correlated with Lower High School Dropout Rates

Percentage of Students Who Drop Out of Whitewater High Schools



”

“Students tell us they like the reflection activities. Students have the time to create a future that they want...They are able to connect how their time in high school relates to their futures.”

*Pamela Sonmor-Wintz  
Director of Guidance, Whitewater High School*







# Increase Access to Career Experiences

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CHAPTER

2

Practice 5: Community-Sourced, Project Based Learning

Practice 6: General Education Externships

Practice 7: Virtual Work-Based Learning

# Picking Careers in a Vacuum

## Students Are Choosing Before Testing Their Interests

High school students today are navigating a more complex set of postsecondary and career options than ever before. Many students leave high school unaware of the full range of jobs available to them, the day-to-day tasks affiliated with these jobs, and how their personal strengths and interests align with potential careers. Consequently, a large share of students make decisions about their next steps and career goals without having the opportunity to explore what might best align with their skills and interests beforehand.



### Undecided Student

- ✔ Selects first major presented to them without refined understanding of interests or goals

“We have an unusually high number of accounting majors because it’s listed first in the course catalogue.”

VP Student Services  
Community College  
(Southeast)



### Nursing Student

- ✔ Declares nursing as a major based on advice from family, friends and limited career knowledge

“Rigor is one thing, but many of our nursing students switch because they discovered they do not like blood.”

Curriculum Dean,  
Community College  
(Mountain West)



### Solar Panel Tech Apprentice

- ✔ Opts into a training program based on salary projections with little awareness of the day-to-day tasks

“Just as I began practicing my skills on the job, I realized that I was too afraid of heights to do this for a living.”

Technical Program Dropout

# Switching Majors Is High-Risk Behavior

## Major Changers Incur Excess Cost and Reduce Likelihood of Completion

The consequences of waiting to explore and test career plans after high school are significant. Correcting a poor decision at a later date will cost students additional time and money in college. While it is not uncommon for students to change their major (sometimes more than once) this often leads to excess credit accumulation and additional time to graduate.

### Most College Students Struggle to Pick Correctly the First Time



*Delayed Completer*

**2.5**

Average number of majors changed during community college

**21**

Average number of excess credits accumulated

**5.6**

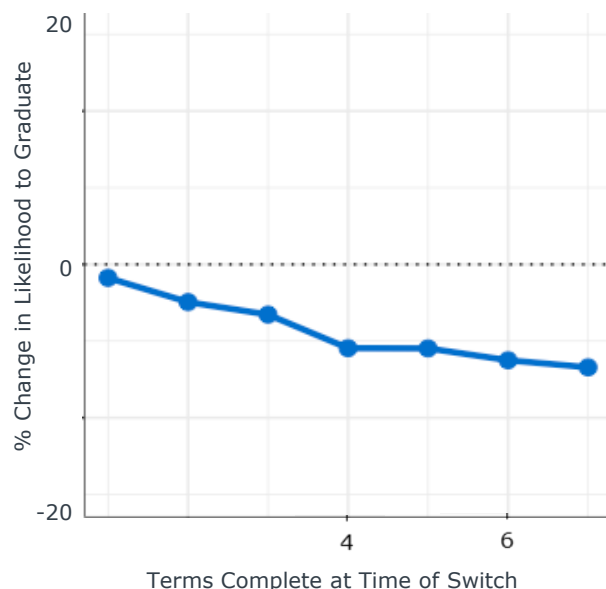
Average elapsed years needed to obtain associate degree

**\$3K–\$19K**

Range of costs associated with excess credits

### Switches Correlated with Lower Graduation Rates

*Percentage Change in Likelihood to Graduate by Terms Complete for Major Switchers*



Not only is acquiring excess credits expensive for students, but also can reduce the likelihood that they will graduate after changing their mind. The longer students persist in the wrong major, the less likely they are to graduate. Therefore, it is imperative for districts to provide students with opportunities to test their career interest and fit within a lower-stakes high school environment.

# Hard to Scale Out-of-School, Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning is considered one of the best ways for students to test out their career fit and interests. However, the challenge of scaling work-based learning is significant. While 75% of districts nationwide have a work-based learning program, these programs typically serve only a small share of students. Due to geographic constraints, districts face difficulty increasing the number of employers willing to host work-based learning opportunities for students.



## Limited Number of Nearby Employer Partners

The number of local employers willing to host work-based learning is usually insufficient to accommodate students interested in work-based learning



## Limited Student Transportation

Not all students have access to transportation, and schools may not be able to bear the cost of providing transportation for every student



## Crowded Academic Schedules

State academic mandates and testing leave little time for students to participate in work-based learning

Furthermore, scaling is an issue for students as well. Even with adequate employer participation, many students are unable to take advantage of work-based learning opportunities because they either do not have access to transportation or do not have the time in their over-crowded schedules.

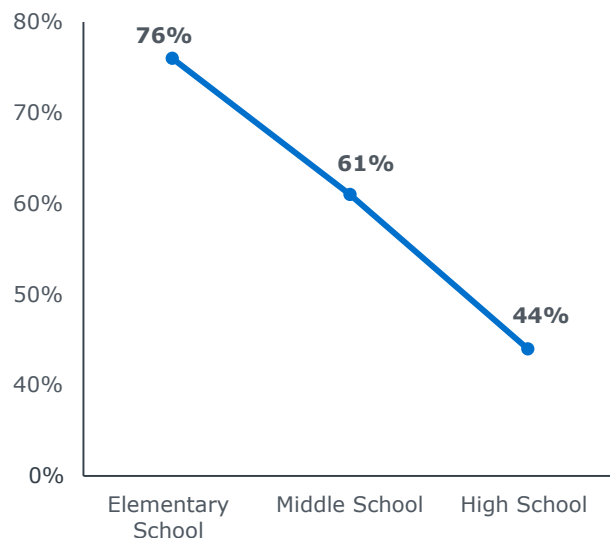
# A Crisis of Relevancy

## Student Engagement Rates Decline When Purpose Is Unclear

Whether districts scale their work-based learning programs or offer experiential learning opportunities for students through alternative models, providing opportunities for students to connect their learning to the real world is critical for student engagement and success. Student engagement in school decreases over time, making high-schoolers the least engaged group of students. Research also indicates that students are at greater risk of becoming disengaged when they can not see how their learning relates to future careers.

### Students' Engagement Decreases Throughout Academic Tenure

*Percentage of Students Engaged in School*



### Declining Engagement Calls for Real-World Classroom Connections

81%

Of high school dropouts report that "seeing the connection between school and getting a job would have kept them in school"

9%

Improvement in high school graduation rates for students engaged in career-based projects over three years

Perhaps it is no surprise that disengaged students are more likely to drop out of high school. In fact, 81% of high school dropouts reported that "seeing the connection between school and getting a job would have kept them in school." Studies have shown a 9% improvement in graduation rates for students engaged in career-based projects. This presents a huge opportunity for districts to help students make connections between their academics, the world around them, and their future goals.

Sources: "The School Cliff: Students' Engagement Drops Over Time," Gallup, 2011; "The Silent Epidemic: Perspective of High School Dropouts," Gates Foundation, 2008; Study of Deeper Learning," American Institutes for Research; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Integrated Learning Critical, But Challenging

## Schools Struggle to Break the Mold of Traditional Classrooms

Districts are starting to explore ways to develop and scale experiential learning opportunities for students, but many challenges remain. First, teachers are unfamiliar with leading student-centered instruction, creating a barrier to project-based learning. Second, districts with traditional work-based learning opportunities worry about the dearth of employer partners. Finally, resources, time, and training barriers deter many districts from adopting experiential learning models altogether.

### Challenges Remain Prevalent

*Why Aren't More Classrooms Adopting Experiential Career Learning?*



Teachers unfamiliar with pedagogical framework



Projects dependent on employer participation



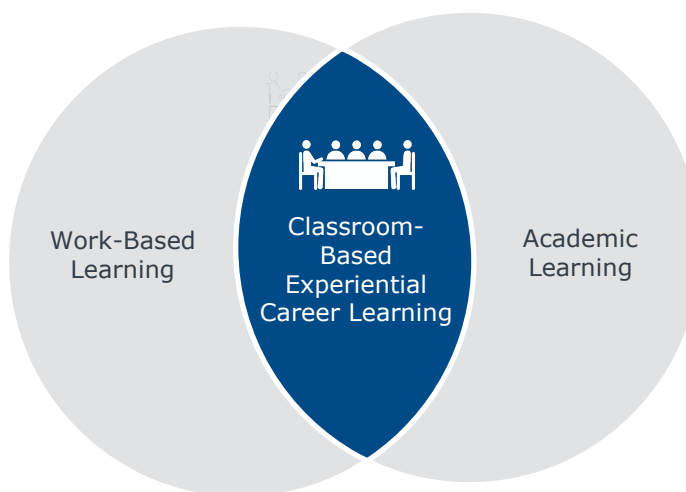
Large amounts of academic requirements often crowd out innovation



Districts have limited access to necessary resources

### Integrate Career and Academic Learning

*Critical Strategy to Promote Student Engagement and Low-Risk Opportunities to Test Career Interests and Fit*



Fortunately, there are practical ways for districts to reengineer existing structures and resources to provide all students with opportunities to test their career interest and fit by integrating academic and career learning in the classroom.

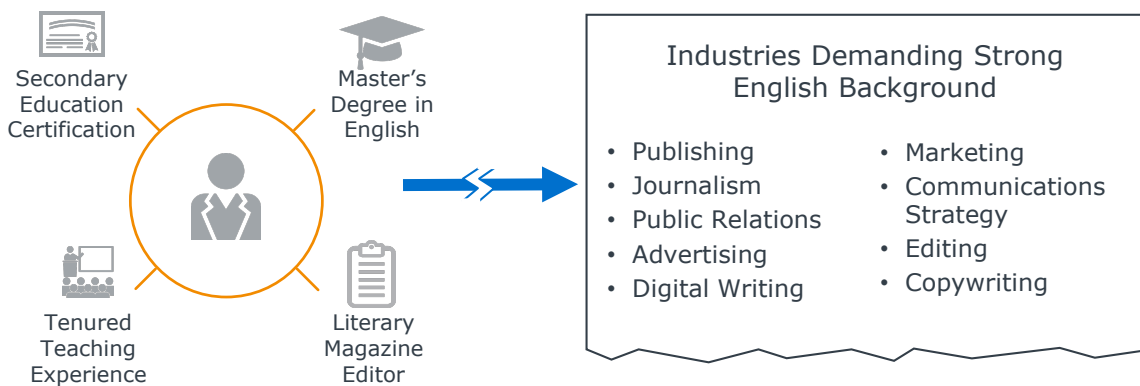
Sources: Strauss V, "[Teacher Spends Two Days as a Student and Is Shocked at What She Learns](#)," *The Washington Post*; "Motivation Matters," 114<sup>th</sup> Partnership (2017); EAB interviews and analysis.

# Teacher Generalists Outnumber Industry Specialists

## Making Real-World Classroom Connections Poses Challenges for Teachers

One of the most daunting challenges facing districts interested in developing experiential learning opportunities is getting teachers to spearhead these initiatives. Teachers almost always have highly specialized experiences and expertise that relate to traditional, teacher-led instruction. Consequently, they may be hesitant to incorporate experiential learning into their pedagogical repertoire because they either do not see the value or do not have the training or expertise needed to provide students with these opportunities.

### Teachers' Lack of Expertise Limits Ability to Provide Real-World Career Education



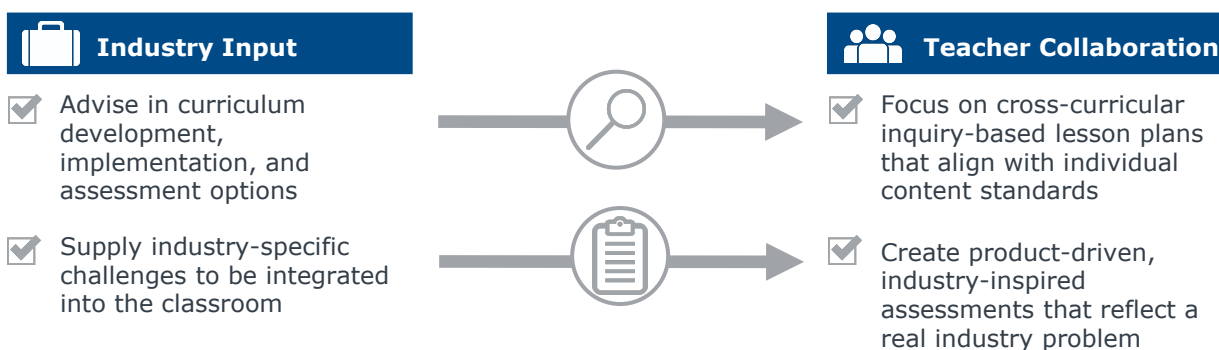
“Teachers have spent their whole lives in a classroom. They go to school, then they go back to the classroom. That’s why our Gen Ed teachers did not understand why foreign language is important in a marketing firm or how a lawyer uses math. **They didn’t have an answer to the question ‘how will I use this outside of school?’ and students were not seeing the connections.**”

*Donna Gilley*  
Director, Academies of Nashville

# Teacher-Directed Industry Learning

## Regionally Sourced Business Input Prompts Authentic Classroom Projects

Rather than relying on teachers to develop authentic experiential learning opportunities, **Long Beach Unified School District** engaged local businesses to source real-world projects. To begin the process, a department-level administrator is tasked with sourcing ideas for projects from local businesses and identifying opportunities to integrate the projects into curricula.



### Single-Subject Integration and Multidisciplinary Projects Promote Industry Application

*Sample Projects Inspired by Local Businesses*

#### English/Engineering/Technology

Compare engineering and technological capabilities at the time the assigned novel was written to what they are today; explain how the outcome of the novel would be different in 2017 as a result of these advances.

#### History/Public Health/Urban Planning

Research the past, present, and future of health policy in Los Angeles to create a museum showcasing the historical evolution of health care in the city.

**Profiled Institution:**

*Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach, CA*



After receiving a list of projects, teachers collaborate during professional development days to develop and exchange lesson plans related to the projects. By reducing the time needed to come up with projects and providing teachers ownership over the lessons, teachers are more likely to bring project-based learning into the classroom. Sourcing opportunities from local business leaders is beneficial for district administrators not only because it reduces the time and effort, but the approach also enhances student achievement. Students who engage in project-based learning experiences on an ongoing basis are 9% more likely to graduate high school, compared to their peers.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.




# Short-Format Experiential Ed for Teachers

## Externships Help Teachers Connect Content to Local Professions

However, simply providing teachers with ideas for project-based learning can be insufficient for expanding it in schools. Many teachers may be hesitant to incorporate these projects into their classroom because they do not fully appreciate how they relate to the workplace. **Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools** uses teacher externships to support general education teachers in understanding how the content they teach is relevant to the work of various industries.

Nashville Externship Program	
Days	Activities
1-3	<p><i>Externship Preparation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers participate in project-based learning training and conduct research on both the company and professional norms of the industry</li> </ul>
2	<p><b><i>Experiencing the Daily Tasks of the Job</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two consecutive days of industry-specific education and development; teachers track their observations throughout the externship</li> </ul>
1	<p><i>Employer and Teacher Roundtable</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration between teachers and employers to design an interdisciplinary unit plan and corresponding student project</li> </ul>

**Profiled Institution:**  *Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools  
Nashville, TN*

**Things to Track in Teachers' On-Site Externship Journals**

- Academic Standards at Work
- Necessary Professional Skills
- Job-Related Concepts and Jargon
- Challenging Day-to-Day Problems
- Teacher Debrief and Reflection
- Relevant Student Deliverables
- Project Alignment Ideas

The ultimate goal of the program is to help teachers develop relevant, multidisciplinary projects for their students. Nashville teachers participate in an “externship” every year for two days to learn about a particular field and how different industries relate to their classroom subjects. In preparation for these externships, teachers and employers undergo extensive preparation. This includes a professional development workshop on project-based learning where teachers must conduct their own independent research on the industry. The externships span two days of job site observations, which teachers document throughout.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

# Employer-Vetted Unit Plans

## Industry Input Makes Real-World Projects Possible

Following these externships, not only do teachers embrace project-based learning, but they also engage students in impressive real-world projects that allow them to refine their interests. With the help of their teachers, students have explored careers in engineering, manufacturing, law, and many others. The projects are aligned with grade-level standards and are designed to be completed over a course of 2–5 weeks. Upon completion, students present their findings to employer partners and get real-time feedback.

### Examples of Students’ Unit Projects

- Create a sensor-and-switch system to automate the watering of plants in the school greenhouse
- 3D print a mechanism for mounting a camera to a Roomba to monitor the school hallways
- Persuade a mock business council by writing and presenting a building proposal for the city
- Reconstruct accident scenes and use data-retrieval protocols to compile vehicle data and identify the cause of each accident
- Design an automated assembly line for manufacturing flashlights

### Key Components of a Unit Project:

- Completed over the course of 2-5 weeks
- Spans multiple courses
- Aligned to grade-level standards
- Often involves a final presentation to employer partners

”

“The absolute, hands-down best professional development we have been able to deliver has been the teacher externship program. It is the **most impactful for teachers and students because it brings relevancy into the classroom.**”

*Donna Gilley  
Director, Academies of Nashville*

<h1>140</h1>	<h1>145</h1>	<h1>678</h1>	<h1>142</h1>
Externships organized over the past 7 years	Employer-vetted interdisciplinary projects	Teachers matched to industry of interest	Regional employers equipped for externships

Ultimately, externships are critical to assuaging teacher skepticism of the value of project-based learning. They provide teachers with real-world contexts of the industries represented by the projects. As a result, students see the real-world relevancy of their learning and receive multiple opportunities to experience authentic work associated with different careers. Teacher externships and their subsequent industry-influenced lesson plans are a hallmark of the Academies of Nashville model. Adopting teacher externships is one way districts can achieve some of the impressive results of an academy without necessarily transitioning to a full-scale academy model.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

# Geography Limits Scale of Work-Based Learning

## Cross County High School Struggles to Identify Internship Opportunities

Work-based learning presents the greatest opportunity for career exploration, but it is also the most challenging to scale. Unlike project-based learning, work-based learning allows students to interact with and learn from employers directly. However, the ability for a district to scale work-based learning is often contingent on the number and variety of nearby employer partners who are willing to host high school students. This makes it nearly impossible for remote districts to develop and expand their work-based learning programs.

### Rural School's Isolation Presents Logistical Obstacles



**Cherry Valley, AR**  
Local Population: 616  
Primary Industry:  
Agriculture



Transportation to places of work



Access to a network of professionals



Proximity to high-demand industries

### Lack of Local Employers Sells Students Short

“We are faced with the **challenge of a lack of business**. We're in a town that has 600 people. We have a gas station, a car wash, a bank, and that's it. This makes implementing quality work-based learning difficult.”

*Matthew Swenson  
Assistant Principal &  
Director of College and Career Access*

**<10%**

Of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students  
participated in  
work-based learning

#### Profiled Institution:

Cross County Schools, Cherry Valley, AR

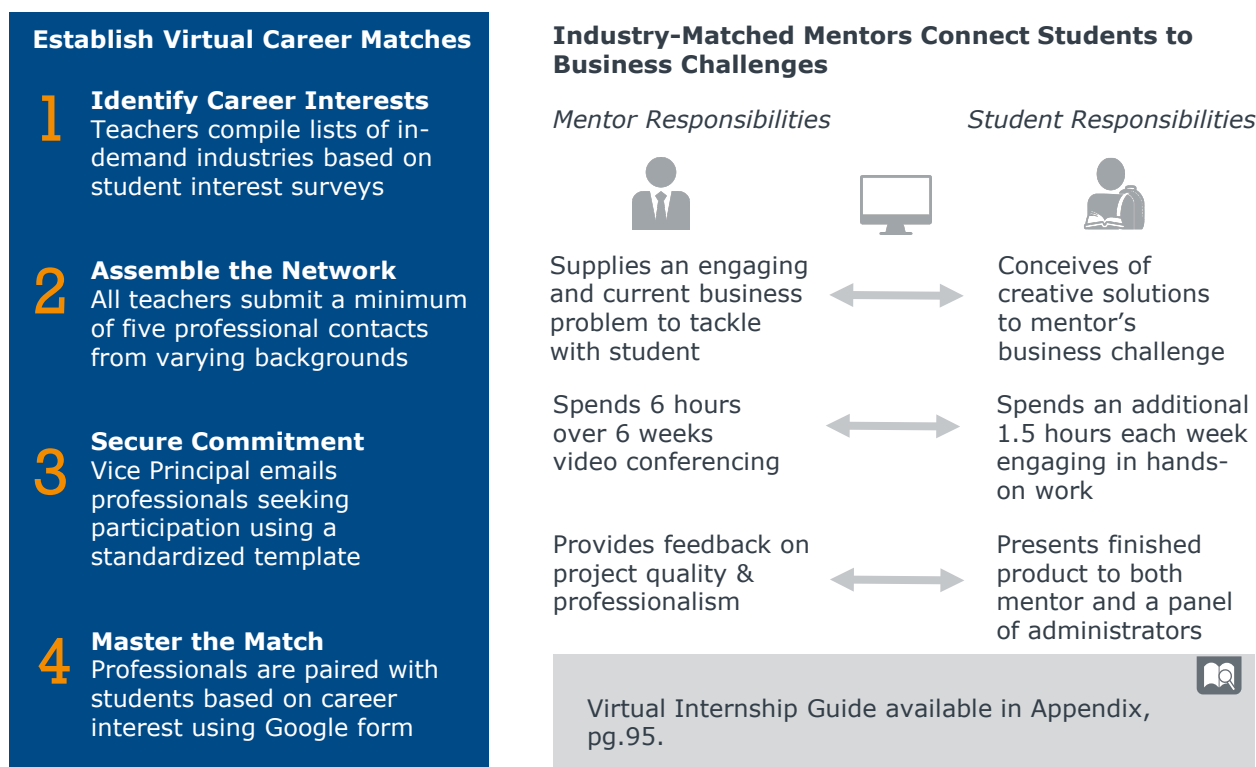


For example, **Cross County School District**, located in rural Arkansas, struggled to connect students with work-based learning opportunities due to its shortage of nearby industries and employers. Agriculture is the largest industry in the region by far, thus limiting the district's partnership opportunities to only one industry. Consequently, less than 10% of students participated in the Cross County Schools' work-based learning program.

# Virtual Business Engagement

## Digital Tools Enable Work-Based Learning Through Remote Matching

To overcome geographical constraints, Cross County Public Schools developed a virtual work-based learning program that connects students with employer volunteers representing industries across the country. To source volunteers, all school staff members submit at least five professional contacts from their network (e.g., friends, family members, and previous employers), prioritizing contacts from in-demand industries. Once students and volunteers are matched based on shared industry interest, students and employers correspond through email and Skype throughout the project.



The program is designed to engage students in industry-specific business challenges and provide them with opportunities to receive real-time employer feedback on their work and professionalism. There are significant resources provided to employers to support them in their mentorship, including a virtual internship guide, student evaluation forms, and templates for planning age-appropriate tasks.

# Examples of Students' Virtual Projects

The program allows students to engage in authentic and challenging work-based learning that represents a wide range of industries and careers. Some examples include designing an oscillating circuit board for a research lab at Virginia Tech, creating interview questions for Google's human resource department, and creating a business plan for virtual health care services. This program requires minimal resources from the district. For the few projects that require additional materials, the district spends on average \$6-\$8 per student.

## Sample of Industry-Specific Projects



Prototype an oscillating circuit to be used in a research lab at Virginia Tech



Devise an interview for Google's human resources department



Design and weld a pipe frame for a vehicle



Write and publish a fictional short story in a university publication



Form dental impressions to be used for braces

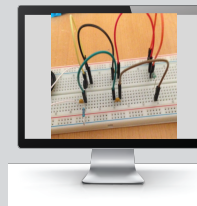


Film and edit a video to train athletic coaches about concussion tests



Create a virtual health care services business plan

## Project Completed by an Aspiring Engineer



- Constructed with the help of a Virginia Tech professor who was researching automated scientific discovery
- Sent to Virginia Tech, where it was used to test robotic scientific automation

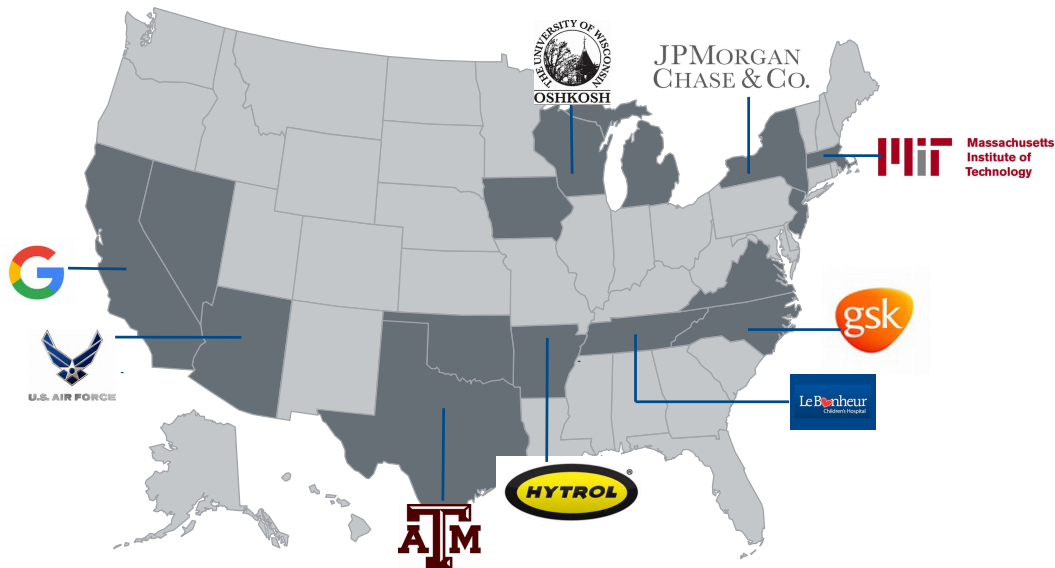
“This kind of exploration helps students self-advocate, communicate with professionals, and broaden their scope of knowledge. And the best part of this initiative is that **students experience the authenticity of being an actual intern.**”

*Matthew Swenson, Assistant Principal & Director of College and Career Access*

# Work-Based Learning Without Borders

Cross County’s virtual work-based learning program has connected almost every one of its 11<sup>th</sup> grade students to a professional mentor. Not only has the program increased student access to work-based learning opportunities within a wide range of careers and industries, but it also has helped 75% of participating students clarify their career interests.

## Cross County Facilitates Virtual Partnerships with Dozens of Organizations



**>50**

Professional mentors  
partnered with  
students

**17**

States were  
represented by  
professional mentors

**98%**

Of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students  
participated in work-  
based learning

**75%**

Of students clarified  
their career interests



# Offer Personalized and Frequent Career Decision Support

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CHAPTER

3

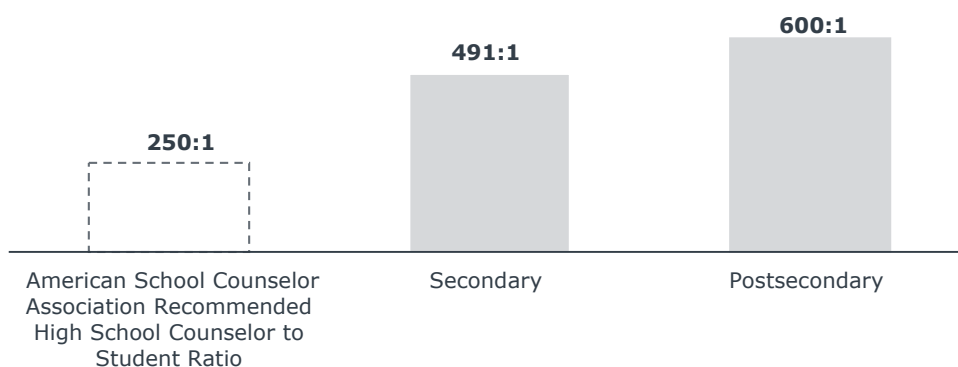
- Practice 8: Career-Based Scheduling
- Practice 9: Industry-Based Advisory Cohorts
- Practice 10: Employer Mentorships



# Good Career Advice Hard to Come By

High school students today have to navigate a complex postsecondary landscape with little support and career advice. Counselor ratios remain on average nearly double the recommended 250:1 ratio. As a result, only 36% of high school graduates make postsecondary industry-specific decisions that align with their strengths and interests. Additionally, more than half of students who receive career guidance from counselors rate their counselors as “fair” or “poor” in helping them think through their career plans.

## Overwhelming Counselor Caseloads Across Education Levels

*Average Student-to-Counselor Ratios Across Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions*



 <p><b>High School Students Dissatisfied with Career Support</b></p> <p><b>36%</b> Of students receive guidance from counselors in determining their future career options</p> <p><b>62%</b> Of students rate their counselors “fair” or “poor” in helping them think about careers</p>	 <p><b>Postsecondary Students Under-supported in Choosing Careers</b></p> <p><b>29%</b> Of students receive career guidance from career services on campus</p> <p><b>40%</b> Of students with or pursuing a bachelor’s degree would choose a different major</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

It is also not advisable for high schools to rely on postsecondary institutions to provide students with timely, high-quality information about education and career options. Less than a third of college students receive career guidance from campus career services. Given that most students never received guidance during their secondary and postsecondary experience, it is not surprising that 40% of students wish they had selected a different major.

Sources: “[Student-to-School-Counselor Ratio 2013-2014](#),” American School Counselor Association; Career Services Report for Colleges and Universities, NACE, 2017; “[College & Career Readiness Data](#),” YouthTruth; Adams S, “[6 Things You Must Do To Get Your First Job After College](#),” *Forbes*; “[Career Services Benchmark Survey](#),” Public Agenda, “[Can I Get a Little Advice Here](#),”; EAB interviews and analysis.

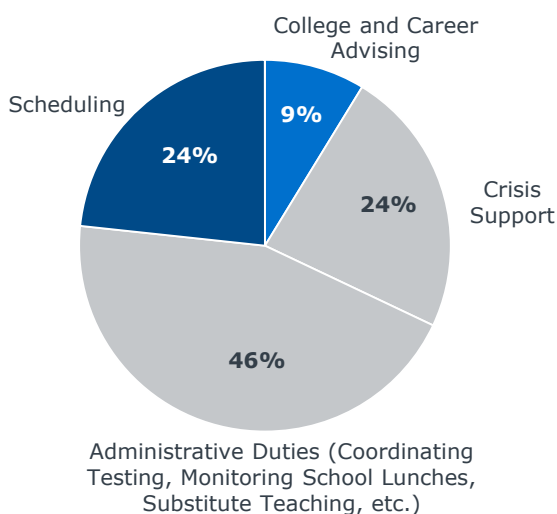


# Little Time for College-and-Career Counseling

## Counseling Limitations Lead to Career Advice Deficit

Large caseloads and time constraints make it nearly impossible for counselors alone to provide the personalized postsecondary advice that students need. In reality, 90% of a counselor's time is spent on tasks that are unrelated to college and career advising, including scheduling and crisis support. Therefore, it is not surprising that a national survey conducted by Public Agenda for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation found that 89% of high school students feel "like another face in the crowd" when it comes to interacting with their high school counselors."

### Counseling Time Scarce and Unfocused *Percentage Breakdown of Counselor Time*



“

### Too Much for One Person's Plate

Career counseling is usually at the bottom of a high school counselor's priority list. First, most are not trained in career counseling, and second, they are putting out too many other fires. They're focusing on scheduling, boyfriend-girlfriend counseling, college applications, you name it...just not career counseling.

*Chris Zirkle*  
*Author of "Youth in Transition: Career Education and Training"*  
*The Ohio State University*

”

District leaders, for the most part, are aware of the limitations of their counseling service, and they struggle to identify ways to provide high-quality decision support at scale with limited time and resources. Unfortunately, adding more counselors is prohibitively expensive for most K-12 systems. To ensure students receive the quality and timely advice they need, districts must rethink how counselor time is used and must reexamine traditional advising structures.

Sources: Paolini, A, "Impact of Accountability Measures on Perceived Counselor Self-Efficacy and Student Outcomes,"; Public Agenda, "Can I Get A Little Advice Here?" EAB interviews & analysis.

# Limited Scheduling Time Well Spent

## Integrate Career Prompts into Scheduling Conversations

**Township High School District 214** ensures time for counselors to discuss careers with students by integrating career conversations into existing scheduling conversations. Since scheduling makes up a quarter of counselors’ time, these talks are ideal times for counselors to encourage students to choose courses based on their personal strengths and career interests. Advisors can direct students to the specific courses that best fit their interests and ambitions. For those students who have not yet thought about or identified their career goals, counselors can support them in starting the process.

### Counselor-Led Career Prompts...



*What industry or industries are you most interested in and why?*



**1**

Focus on industries, rather than specific careers, to prevent artificial pathway narrowing



*What have you learned about your strengths and interests this past year?*



**2**

Embed reflection on skills and interests into scheduling conversations



*How confident do you feel about your plans after high school and why?*



**3**

Validate interests and assess the desire for alternate pathway consideration or additional career information



*What classes can help you achieve or narrow down your long-term industry aspirations?*



**4**

Make high school course work relevant to students’ long-term aspirations

### Profiled Institution:

Township High School District 214, Arlington Heights, IL



**3x**

Increase in the number of career conversations per student during their high school tenure




Scheduling conversations starts with four career-related prompts that help students select courses aligned with their strengths and career interests. These 20-minute conversations occur annually so that conversations that occur during each high school year remain relevant to students’ short- and long-term goals. As a result, students in Township High School District 214 now participate in three times as many career conversations as the average US student. The prompts also provide other long-term benefits. First, they encourage students to cultivate self-reflection skills early on, which are necessary for discerning careers that align with their personal strengths. Second, framing scheduling conversations around career prompts sends students the underlying message that academics can help them reach their long-term career goals.



# Industry Career Guidance Takes a Village

## Insufficient Counselor Capacity to Provide Industry-Specific Advice

While increasing the time spent on career counseling is critical, ensuring high quality conversations is equally important. The reality is that schools also struggle with providing high quality advice because the average school counselor is not trained to be an expert across every industry. It is unrealistic for districts to ask one person with limited labor market training to be able to provide in-depth guidance across every industry.



**John Connington**  
High School Counselor

-  **Limited Industry Knowledge**
  - Master’s in child psychology and counseling
  - Five years experience as a middle school teacher
  - Bachelor’s degree in education
-  **Limited Capacity to Develop Industry Knowledge**

Responsible for supporting 423 high school students through scheduling, crisis support, and advising

## Underutilized Pool of Potential Advisors Closer Than You Think

*Sample of Industries Related to Teacher Subject Expertise*



### English Teacher

- Public Relations
- Journalism



### Biology Teacher

- Health Care
- Anatomy



### Geometry Teacher

- Construction
- Engineering



### US History Teacher

- Government
- Law



### Computer Teacher

- Technology
- Coding



### Economics Teacher

- Business
- Advertising
- Marketing

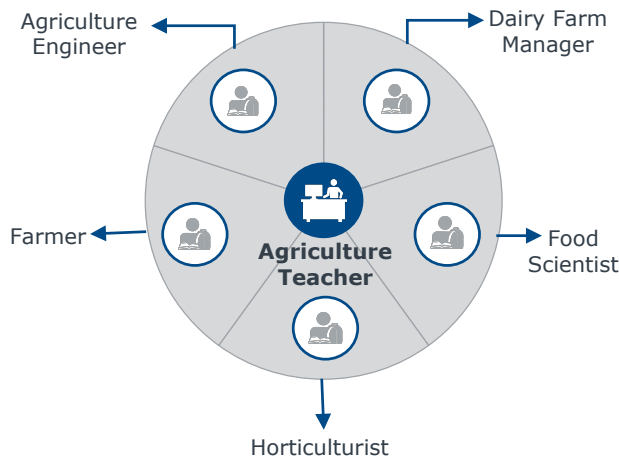
Teachers are experts in their subject areas, making them well-positioned to learn about and advise on career pathways that relate to those subjects. Districts should explore alternative advising models that rely on teachers to help provide additional career guidance.

# Industry-Based Cohorts Deepen Career Knowledge

**Greenwood Public Schools** utilizes its teachers to provide students with industry-specific career advice. Due to limited time in the school day, the district uses its existing advisory periods as opportunities to provide students with structured career guidance. While most districts match students with counselors alphabetically or at random, Greenwood School District reengineered its advisory cohorts so that students’ industry interests are matched with teachers who have a familiarity or affinity for the same industry.

## Advisory Cohorts Match Students’ Interest with Teacher Affinity

*Example of Agriculture Advisory Cohort*



## Cohort Activities Help Students Evaluate Careers of Interest

- Employer networking opportunities deepen knowledge of education and skill requirements for various careers
- Field trips to employer sites refine students’ on-the-job knowledge
- Networking research during advisory periods helps students source career contacts and resources within the industry
- Student-led industry discussions promote broader and deeper awareness of career possibilities and pathways

**Profiled Institution:**  
 Greenwood School District, Greenwood, AR

**16** Number of cohorts representing different industries

**3x** Number of meetings per week

For example, students who are interested in being a farmer or a food scientist are in the same advisory cohort as a teacher who either teaches or is interested in agriculture. By organizing advisory periods around student industry interests, the district ensures that students have access to structured, career-related activities and guidance. To determine advisory cohort assignments, students take an online career assessment, and teachers submit their industry interests via school surveys. Students meet with their cohorts three times a week, and they stay in the same cohorts throughout high school. Advisory periods provide students with opportunities to engage in a series of activities that help them identify the education, experience, and skills needed for specific industries and careers. These activities include employer guest speakers, field trips to employer sites, and student-led research on careers.

# Counselors Bolster Teacher Advising Skills

## Ongoing Support Improves Quality of Advice

Greenwood Public Schools equips teachers with industry-specific resources and advising support that teachers need to offer accurate and effective guidance. Through a “train the trainer” model, counselors support advisory teachers across four areas so that the responsibility of industry guidance can be shared across a number of staff. Rather than expecting teachers to learn trends across multiple industries, the district expects each teacher to solely focus on learning careers and pathways within his or her assigned industry.

### Support Provided by Counselors



#### Industry Externships

Externships improve teachers' ability to advise students on preparing for specific careers

#### Customizable Career Lessons

Interactive career-based lessons are easily adaptable to each industry



#### Up-to-Date Labor Market Data

Most recent industry data allows advisors to provide accurate industry information and guidance

#### Advising In-Days

Counselor-led professional development enhances teachers' advising skills



“We used to assign our kids to advisors based on where they fell in the alphabet. But we realized that when it came to careers, many of our teachers come from other fields besides education. We realized we were ignoring sources of industry knowledge, which was right under our noses. **Our kids are now thinking about their careers far before they are walking across the stage.**”

*Cody Chatman, Principal, Greenwood Public Schools*



To support teachers, the district encourages them to visit employer sites at least once during the school year to improve their ability to advise students on preparing for careers related to that field. Counselors also disseminate up-to-date industry data and lead coaching sessions on advising techniques for teachers at the beginning of each school year. Finally, teachers receive allocated time during professional development days to collaborate on developing and exchanging career exploration lessons that could easily be adapted for any industry. Sharing the responsibility of industry-specific guidance to teachers (with counselor support) has allowed Greenwood to get closer to scaling quality career advice across the district.

# An Untapped Pool of Community Volunteers

## Busy Professionals Eager to Mentor But Face Limitations

Many students view employers as the best channel for providing industry-specific guidance. In fact, almost all high school students state that they find employers to be either “very helpful” or the “most helpful” source of career advice.

### Large Share of Students Want Employer Advice

**83%** Of high school graduates believe employers are “very helpful” sources of career advice

**80%**

*Of professionals are willing to volunteer 1–2 hours a week for education mentoring*



#### Don't Have Enough Time

“My last mentor experience required more of my time than I was able to give. I felt bad because I had to cancel or reschedule a few mentor meetings.”

**8%**

*Of professionals participate in education mentoring programs*



#### Don't Know What to Do

“I’m happy to volunteer if I can make an impact. I would need some up-front ideas on how to work with high school students.”

Despite this promising channel of advice, most students do not have access to employer mentors. While 80% of professionals are interested in acting as mentors for students, very few actually do. Employers are either too busy to commit to a mentoring program or they are unsure of how to best serve their mentee.

Sources: “Volunteering in the United States, 2012,” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Feb. 2012; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Range of Choices Yield Higher Participation

## Employers More Likely to Volunteer When Presented with Options

**Champaign Community School District Unit 4** recruits volunteers by emailing a list of every volunteer opportunity within the district and the estimated time affiliated with each opportunity. By communicating all the opportunities and time commitments up front using a simple email template, employers have ample time to plan ahead and choose which options are realistic for their schedules. The menu of options, with variable levels of commitment, makes it more difficult for prospective volunteers to decline.

### Offer a Menu of Discrete Volunteer Options

*Abbreviated Sample Email Sent to Local Employers*

Hi Jane,

Champaign Community Schools Unit District 4 is seeking employer volunteers to help high school students explore careers, plan, and achieve their postsecondary goals. Would any of these volunteer options below fit with your schedule? **If you are interested in any or all of these options, let me know by July 1<sup>st</sup>.**

<i>Job Presentation</i>	30 minutes per year
<i>Informational Interview</i>	1 hour per year
<i>Career Mentoring</i>	15 hours per year

I look forward to hearing from you!

Marc

Career Programming Coordinator  
Champaign Community School District Unit 4  
Champaign, IL

**1** Allow employers to choose from several volunteer options

**2** Set shared expectations by listing the estimated time required by each activity

**3** Add urgency by bolding your request and including a deadline—real or artificial




Employers are invited to indicate their availability for volunteer options throughout the year. As a result, the district is able to create a database of volunteers for each opportunity. After experimenting with different strategies to engage with employers (including asking employers to volunteer for one-time events), the district has found this method the most effective in increasing the overall pool of employer volunteers.

# Provide the Know-How

## Explicit Guidance and Support Enhance Mentor Effectiveness

The second major barrier to recruiting employer mentors is that many of them simply do not know how to best use the time with students. Champaign addresses this need by providing career mentors with explicit guidance and support so that they can be even more effective when they meet with students. Champaign maintains a list of innovative conversation topics or mentoring activities that it distributes to all volunteers.

### Pillars of Support for Employer Mentors...

 <p><b>Suggested Activities</b> Provide examples of mentoring activities to ensure employers can lead meaningful interactions with students</p>	<p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Show students where and how to find industry trends and projections</i></li> </ul>
 <p><b>Discussion Guidelines</b> List targeted questions to act as mentorship guidelines so that students receive quality, career-specific advice</p>	<p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>If you could start your career over, what would you do differently?</i></li> <li>• <i>How would additional education impact the industry opportunities and lifestyle available to high school graduates?</i></li> <li>• <i>What high school courses would help someone prepare for the field?</i></li> </ul>
 <p><b>On-Demand Mentor Support</b> Encourage employer volunteers to call district staff directly for mentorship support if needed</p>	

### ...Yields Greater Student and Employer Satisfaction

**125**


Students participated in one-on-one career mentoring

**80%**

Of students claimed their mentors helped refine their postsecondary goals

**95%**

Of mentors wanted to volunteer the following year

 Suggested activities and discussion guidelines available in Appendix, pg.90.

The district’s approach to recruiting and supporting employer volunteers has led to over a hundred career mentorships. Almost all participating students found their mentors helpful in narrowing their postsecondary goals, and nearly all of the district’s volunteers expressed a willingness to volunteer the following year.





# Formally Aid Workplace Transitions

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CHAPTER

4

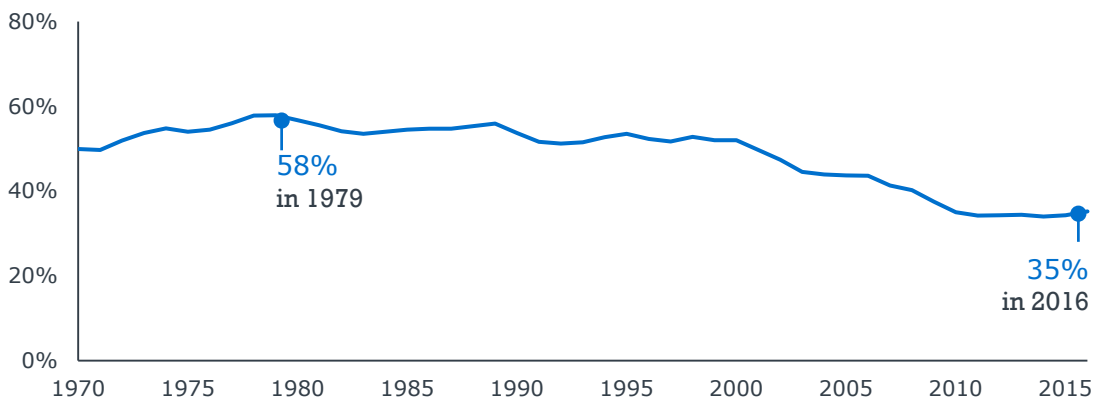
- Practice 11: Employer-Led Workplace Skills Intensives
- Practice 12: Ethnographic Career Research
- Practice 13: Curriculum-Wide Transferable Skills Callouts
- Practice 14: School-Wide Elevator Pitches
- Practice 15: Career-Interests Capstone Presentation
- Practice 16: Student Workplace Performance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

# The (Professional) Experience Gap

Traditionally, high school students developed professional skills and experience through part-time jobs. However, today's adolescents are working less than those from previous generations, in part due to increased demands on their personal and academic schedules, but also because adults are increasingly filling what had been low-wage, part-time jobs. Skills that previously may have been taught in a workplace setting or after-school job is no longer a significant part of the adolescent experience.

## 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

Meanwhile, employers consider part-time work experiences and internships highly valuable in the hiring process. In most cases, employers weigh work experience even more heavily than students' academic record.

Sources: Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), St. Louis Federal Reserve; Korach S, "What employers really look for in recent college graduates," *USA Today College*; "The Role of Higher Education in Career Development: Employer Perceptions." *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2012); EAB interviews and analysis.

# A New Mandate for Districts

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Unfortunately, many students—particularly those who have never held a job—receive few opportunities to hone their professional skills and experience early on. With fewer opportunities to develop these workplace skills, many superintendents feel that schools increasingly have a role to play to prepare students for work.

“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.**”

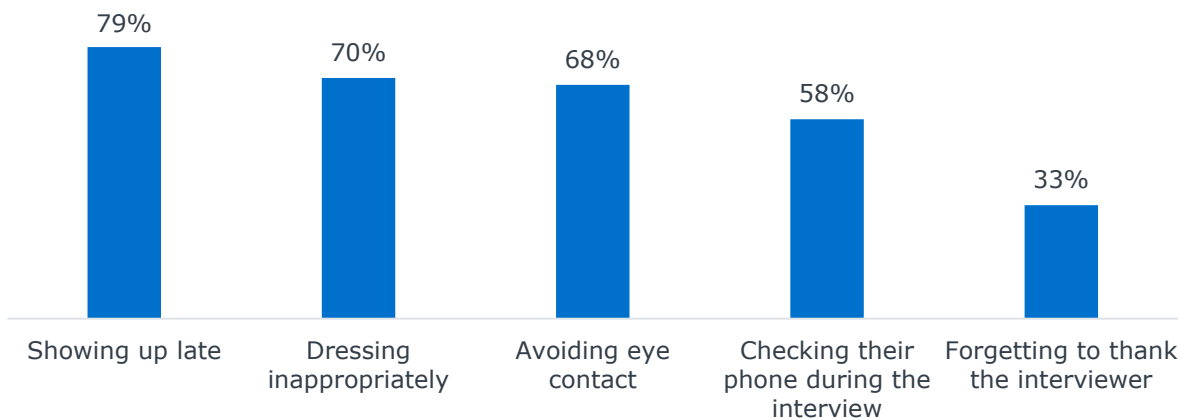
*Superintendent, Midwest School District*

# Basic Professionalism Skills Critical for Employment

Interview performance is particularly important in employment decisions. Yet, a large share of entry-level candidates fail to present themselves professionally during a job interview. Recruiters report 79% of candidates showing up late to interviews, 70% of candidates dressing inappropriately, and more than half of candidates demonstrating poor interpersonal and communication skills, such as avoiding contact and checking their phones during an interview. Regardless of academic achievements, students who lack basic interview skills face difficulty entering the job market.

## 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 tiebreaker for hiring

Sources: "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.

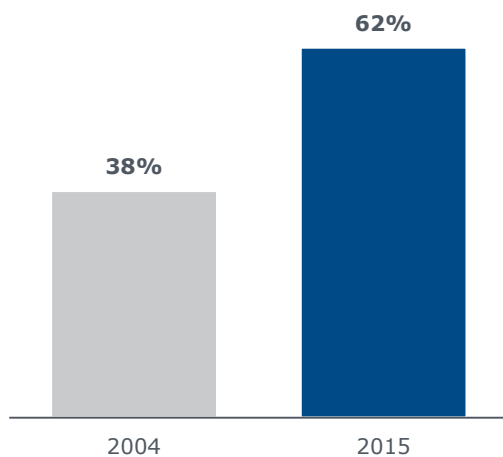
# Not Your Fault, but It Is Your Problem

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

Whether or not districts view professional skill development as their responsibility, employers and students point to schools as key players in closing the professional skills gap. The percentage of employers indicating dissatisfaction with how well schools prepare students for work has increased dramatically over the last decade. A 2015 survey found that 62% of employers thought schools were not adequately preparing students for work, a 38% increase from 2004. Students are also dissatisfied—nearly three-quarters of recent graduates thought their high schools failed to fully prepare them for the professional world.

### Employers Are Increasingly Disappointed in Schools

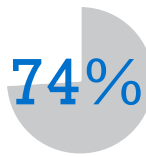
*Percentage of Employers Who Believe Schools Aren't Preparing Students for Work*



“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

Although district leaders are often interested in addressing the disconnect between student skills and employer demands, many are skeptical of how to provide skill development opportunities for students, given the dearth of resources available to them. Fortunately, there are numerous ways in which districts can provide those opportunities within existing academic structures.

Sources: [“Rising to the Challenge”](#) survey, Achieve (2015); [“Way to Work”](#) survey (2016), Adecco Group; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Straight from the Horse’s Mouth

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

The first and most basic step to developing students’ professional skills is communicating employer expectations directly to students. While many schools have one-off opportunities to teach students these expectations, such as hosting a resume workshop, most schools lack a comprehensive curriculum dedicated to teaching workplace norms. Rather than adding another set of curriculum for teachers to deliver, **Cristo Rey** uses their employer network to lead a mandatory workplace skills intensive workshop during freshman orientation week.



<b>Key Features of Employer Workplace Skills Intensives</b>		
<p><b>Integrate into Existing Events</b> Students learn workplace skills during an intensive, two-week orientation</p>	<p><b>Make It Mandatory</b> School requires all incoming freshmen to attend</p>	<p><b>Minimize Employer Commitment</b> Employers generally teach only one topic each to minimize time commitment</p>

**Profiled Institution:**  
Cristo Rey Network, Chicago, IL

Integrating this course into freshman orientation not only avoids interfering with academic schedules, but it also ensures all students learn from employers directly. Using lesson templates and curriculum suggestions from the school, employers teach students the skills and attributes they expect from entry-level employees.

# A Clear and Consistent Message

## Kids Pay Attention When Employers Teach Workplace Skills

During the workshops, employers teach workplace readiness skills (e.g., business etiquette), lifelong learning behaviors (e.g., time management), and technical skills (e.g., internet research). Because employers describe the workplace skills that they expect from new employees, students are more likely to internalize the importance of these skills. This model has yielded impressive results, with 94% of employers indicating that students met or exceeded expectations at internships following the workplace skills orientation.

### Workplace Skills Topics

- 1 Workplace Readiness**  
*Business Etiquette, Communication, Collaboration, Interpersonal Relations, Complex Reasoning*
- 2 Lifelong Learning Behaviors**  
*Time Management, 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*

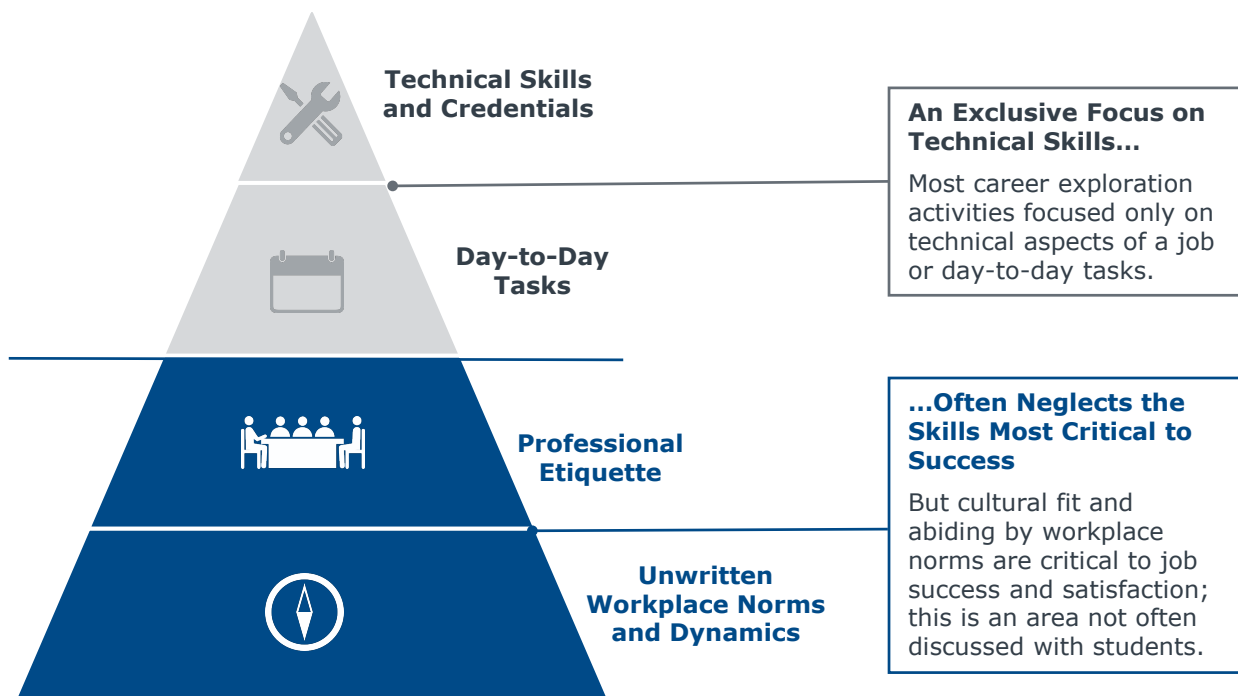
94%

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

A student's ability to adhere to professional etiquette and workplace norms is arguably just as critical to his or her ability to succeed at the technical aspects of the job. Unfortunately, traditional career exploration activities in high schools focus almost exclusively on the technical skills or the day-to-day tasks required for a job.



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



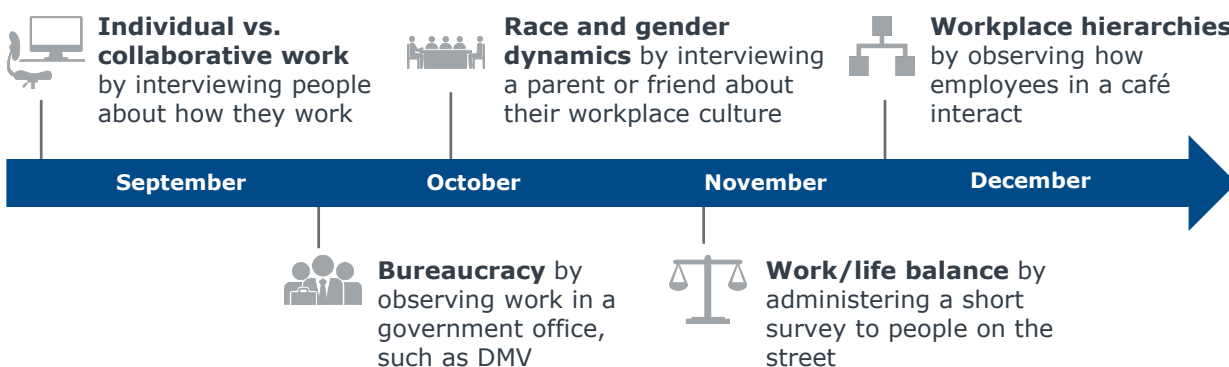
# Build Student Confidence as Ethnographers

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

To ensure students are attuned to these norms, **Guttman Community College** in New York City integrates these lessons into a career exploration course called Ethnography of Work, which has the potential to be replicated in K-12 districts. Students visit various employer sites each month to observe and interview employees about a range of underlying dynamics in a given work environment.

### 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 his or her findings

**Profiled Institution:**  
Guttman Community College, New York, NY



Each month, the focus is on a different theme to guide students’ research. The class begins with students observing bureaucratic work environments at the DMV in September and ends with them observing workplace hierarchies in a café. Prior to each field assignment, students brainstorm possible questions for employees. Then they write a small essay summarizing their experiences in order to complete the field assignment. In addition to teaching students about underlying workplace norms, the course hones students’ research, survey writing, and interviewing skills—all of which are critical skills in a variety of work environments.

# Explore Careers of Interest Through Inquiry

## Students Apply Ethnographic Skills to Careers of Interest

Unlike traditional job shadowing experiences, ethnographic exercises encourage students to pay attention to unwritten workplace norms that help employees succeed. Students spend their entire first workplace visit simply observing and sitting in on meetings or other activities. The goal is to help students learn not just the technical aspects of the job but also to develop the skills to identify many of the unspoken rules and norms in a professional setting.

### 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

- Do the guidelines for vacation and maternity leave differ?
- 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



“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*

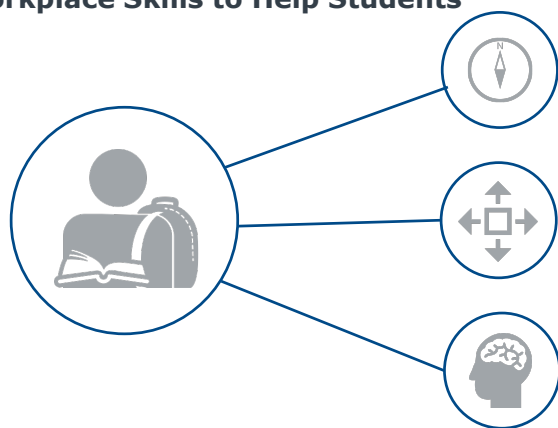
The experience also provides indirect benefits to students and employers alike. It helps students determine the kind of work environment that most appeals to them. The student observations, in turn, help employers identify both healthy and counterproductive workplace dynamics that might need to be addressed.

# Students Benefit When Skills Are Made Explicit

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

In many cases, students learn professional skills and experiences that are relevant to the workplace during high school. Unfortunately, when students start to build out their resume or during interviews with potential employers, they struggle to clearly communicate these skills and experiences in a way that will resonate with employers. This is largely because students never connect how certain skills they learn in school, such as leading presentations and collaborating in group activities, relate to the skills that employers value.

### 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.



Research indicates that helping students make this connection yields a number of long-term benefits for students, including strengthened metacognition, improved ability to transfer knowledge across contexts, and improved knowledge acquisition.

# A Light (but Critical) Lift for Teachers

## Teachers Highlight Transferable Skills Developed in Existing Curricula

**Kansas City Public Schools** helps its students develop a skills-oriented vocabulary by requiring teachers to articulate the skills developed by each course activity. A committee of regional business leaders identified a list of general professional skills that they look for in prospective employees. Teachers highlight these skills in specific assignments either on their syllabi or on assignment instructions. The initiative requires little teacher effort and no course redesign—simply a clearer articulation of the professional skills that students develop in their courses, assignment by assignment.

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

### 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*

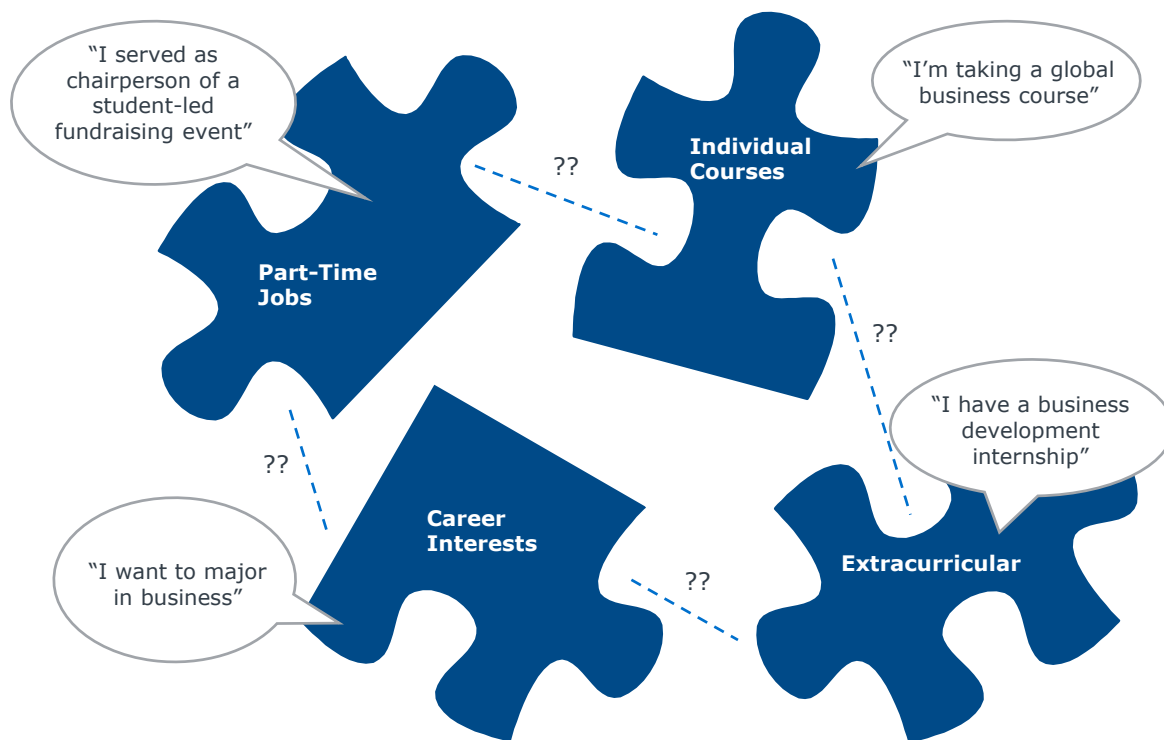
**Profiled Institution:**  
 Kansas City Public Schools,  
 Kansas City, KS



# ‘Tell Me Why You’re Qualified’

## Students Struggle to Articulate the Relevancy of Their Experiences to a Job

Equally important to building students’ awareness of workplace skills they learn in schools is ensuring that students can articulate how their learning relates to a specific career. This is critical because hiring managers often lack the information or time necessary to develop deep understanding of how curricular and cocurricular elements of a student’s education prepares him or her for a specific job.



Most students—regardless of their academic preparation—are ill-equipped to articulate the value of their experiences beyond a list of courses and content. Many students fundamentally struggle to communicate to prospective employers the skills they developed while in school or how these skills meet the demands of specific careers. In short, students need to transition from “I took” and “I learned” statements toward the ability to assert “I did” and “I can do.”

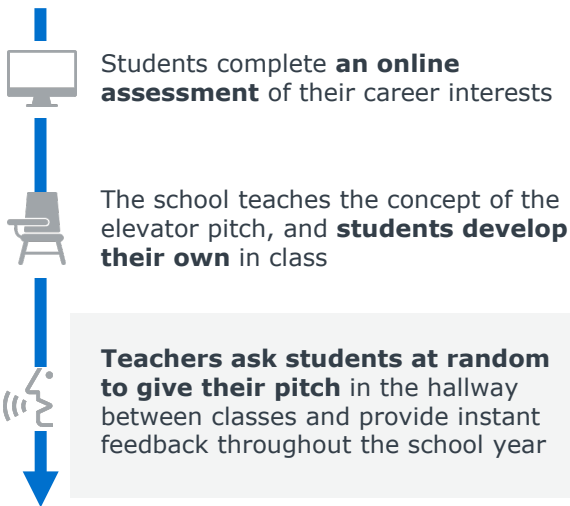
Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

# Putting Skill Articulation to the Test

## Teachers Prompt Pitch Practice Between Class Periods

To help students articulate the value of their high school experience for prospective employers, **Blue Valley School District** trains all high school students to develop and deliver their career elevator pitch. The district makes use of the time between class periods as an opportunity for students to practice communicating how their courses and extracurricular activities relate to their career interests.

### Process Steps for Pitch Development



### Techniques for Promoting Pitches

- To keep pitches dynamic, adults constantly ask students how their current lessons relate to their desired careers
- 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



As part of their English class, students take an online assessment of their career interests and learn the importance of elevator pitches in the workplace. All students then develop their own 30-second pitch. Throughout the year, teachers convey to students how their class lessons relate to career preparation. Once students have developed their initial pitches, teachers and school visitors can ask students to give a pitch in the hallway at any given moment. They are encouraged to provide students with immediate feedback so that they can refine their pitches as needed.

# Achieving ‘Perfect Pitch’

## Students Communicate Career Relevance of Courses and Extracurriculars

Below is an example of a Blue Valley CAPS student’s elevator pitch. All pitches contain four key attributes that are emphasized by the school. First, each pitch leads with a quick summary of the student’s goals. Second, students are encouraged to communicate how their academic experience and extracurricular activities relate to their future plans. Third, students should describe how their activities produced specific results. The most challenging attribute is that students must demonstrate succinct communication by limiting their pitches to 30 seconds.

### 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 course work, 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

#### Goal-Oriented

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 course work

#### Result-Oriented

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

### Rule of Thumb



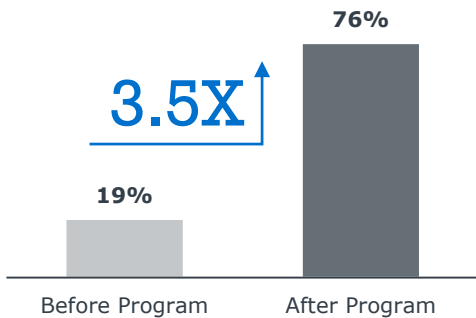
Elevator pitches should be limited to **30 seconds or less**

# Elevator Pitches Improve Student Confidence

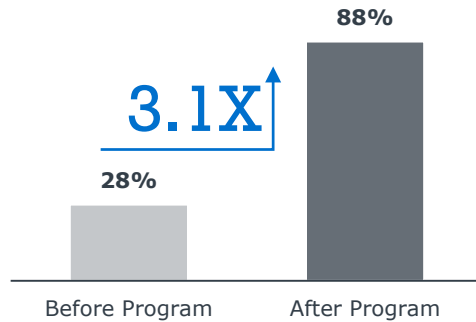
To evaluate the impact of pitches, the district survey had students during their freshman year and then again during their senior year. Overall, students who had participated in Blue Valley’s elevator pitch initiative demonstrated increased confidence when communicating with adults. Results indicate that the percentage of students confident in giving an elevator pitch and conversing with business professionals more than tripled during a four-year period.

## 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

Sources: “CAPS Professional Skills Confidence Survey,” Blue Valley USD, May 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.



# Celebrate Articulation of Career Interests and Plans

## A Capstone Formalizes Communication and Reflection on Experiences

Another way to help students effectively articulate how high school experiences impact their postgraduation trajectory is to offer opportunities for students to formally present on their postsecondary plans. **Whitewater Unified School District** introduced a capstone presentation option for seniors, in which students conduct a 15-minute presentation on their high school accomplishments and how those accomplishments relate to the students' long-term goals. Students' families, friends, and teachers are all invited to attend the presentations.



### 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

#### Postsecondary Plans

Explain their immediate postsecondary 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, pg.92.

The first half of each presentation focuses on student accomplishments. During this time, students discuss which academic and elective courses were the most valuable to them individually, as well as their volunteer experiences and extracurricular activities. Students then transition from these experiences to what they plan to do upon graduation. Specifically, students discuss which programs of study they plan to pursue, a financial plan for how they intend to budget once they start an entry-level job, and their longer-term career goals.

# Capstone Event a Significant Motivation

## Formalized Presentation Widely Seen as Benefiting Quality of Work

Whitewater Unified School District signals the importance of the district’s capstone initiative in several ways. First, all capstone presenters have a formal audience of important guests, including community members and students’ families and close friends. Second, capstone projects are considered to be equally important as final exams. In fact, students who lead a capstone presentation are exempted from a final exam during their senior year. Last, the district awards students with a certificate upon completion of their capstone presentation.

### 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

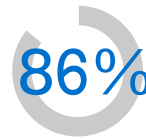


#### Certification of Completion

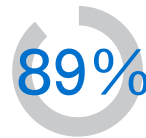
Principals award students upon completion of their presentations

### High Return on Student Performance

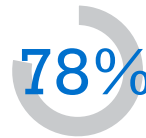
*Percentage of Respondents Who Believe Presentations Improve Student Academic Motivation*



2016 Graduates



Parents



Teachers

Almost all participating students, parents, and teachers believe that these capstone presentations improve student academic motivation. Capstone preparation often requires students not only to connect their high school learning to future careers but also to map out a postsecondary plan that usually includes further education. As a testament to their impact, more than 50 school districts have visited Whitewater to learn more about the capstone presentations and the wider Academic and Career Portfolio Program.

# Awards Signal What a School Values

## Schools Signal Many Things as Important, but Not Workplace Excellence

Despite the important role that professional skill development has on students' long-term success, most districts lack formalized rewards for students' achievements in this area. Meanwhile, schools have a whole host of awards for student academic, athletic, and community service success. By failing to recognize students for accomplishment professionally, districts send the message to students that professional skills are less important.

### Partial List of Signals Schools Send to Increase Motivation



#### Academic

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



#### Athletic

- School Trophy Case
- Championship Banners
- Athlete of the Week
- 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

The **Cristo Rey Network** elevates the importance of professional skills to the level of academic performance by offering workplace performance awards to students. These awards encourage students to take their career development and workplace performance seriously. Award recipients are determined by either employers who oversee work-based learning participants or teachers who recognize students for demonstrated professionalism in class.




### 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*

These monthly awards are not only simple but are also cost-effective. Examples of these awards include recognizing students during school-wide assemblies and awarding students \$15 gift cards. Despite the simplicity of these awards, students are motivated not only to succeed academically but also professionally.



# Appendix


## Implementation Resources

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# Denver Public Schools Sample Pathway Guide

Insurance Agent

 <b>CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION</b> <small>Discover a World of Opportunity</small>	<b>Pathway: Insurance</b> <b>Finance Career Cluster</b>
	<b>Plan of Study: Insurance Agent</b>

**Career Goal (O\*Net Code):** Actuary (15-2011), Sales Agent (41-3021), Claims Processing (43-9041), Investigator (13-1031), Appraiser (13-1032), Underwriter (13-2053).

Suggested High School Courses				
<b>High School</b> <small>* Default includes CDHE Higher Education Admission Requirements</small>	9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Core Academic Courses*:</b>	Intro to Lit and Comp 1 & 2, Algebra 1, Social Studies Elective, Earth Science, Arts or Career & Technical Education elective, P.E.	<b>Suggested Electives:</b> AVID, World Language
		<b>Career Path Courses:</b>	Technology Applications, Computer Business Applications	
	10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Core Academic Courses*:</b>	American Lit 1 & 2, Geometry, Biology, US History, Academic Elective	<b>Suggested Electives:</b> Marketing 1 & 2, AVID, World Language
		<b>Career Path Courses:</b>	Business Law, Business Management, Word Processing 1 & 2, Entrepreneurship	
	11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Core Academic Courses*:</b>	World Lit or Writing Elective, Algebra 2, Chemistry or Physics, Civics 1 sem., Social Studies Elective 1 sem.	<b>Suggested Electives:</b> World Language Marketing 3 & 4
		<b>Career Path Courses:</b>	Accounting 1 & 2 (counts as 4 <sup>th</sup> year math requirement), Financial Management, Technical Writing	
	12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Core Academic Courses*:</b>	Language Arts Elective, math higher than Algebra	<b>Suggested Electives:</b> World Languages
		<b>Career Path Courses:</b>	Accounting 3 & 4, Future Choices 1 & 2, Executive Internship	

Secondary to Postsecondary Linkages & Certifications	
<b>Recognition for Advanced Learning</b>	<b>Postsecondary Credit Options:</b> <i>Advanced Credit Pathways (ACP)</i> - ACC 101 (Accounting 1/2), BTE 102 (Technological Applications), BTE 103 (Word Processing 1/2), BUS 110 (Entrepreneurship), BUS 116 (Financial Management), CIS 108 (Computer Business Applications), MAR 106 (Future Choices 1/2), and MAR 111 (Marketing 1 & 2)
	<b>Industry Recognized Certificate(s) or License(s):</b> Microsoft Office Certified Application Specialist (MCAS) certification – Excel, Word, Access, PowerPoint Career Ready Colorado Certificate (WorkKeys)

		Postsecondary Programs Available in Colorado	Colorado Institutions	Entrance Exams/ Requirements
<b>Postsecondary Education Opportunities</b>	Certificate	Accounting, Banking & Financial Services, Business Administration - Finance, Financial Services	<b>AVS:</b> Emily Griffith, San Juan Basin <b>Community Colleges/Colleges:</b> Aims CC, Arapahoe CC, Colorado Mountain College, Colorado Northwestern CC, CC of Aurora, CC of Denver, Front Range CC, Pikes Peak CC, Red Rocks CC, Otero Junior College	High School diploma/GED Accuplacer
	Associate Degree	Mathematics, Accounting, Business Administration - Finance, Financial Services	Mesa State College, Aims CC, Arapahoe CC, Colorado Mountain College, Colorado Northwestern CC, CC Aurora, CC of Denver, Front Range CC, Pikes Peak CC, Pueblo CC, Red Rocks CC, Mesa State College	High School diploma/GED Accuplacer
	Bachelor Degree	Mathematics, Finance, Economics, Accounting, Actuarial Science	Fort Lewis College, Mesa State College Metropolitan State College of Denver, Western State College, Colorado State University More options: collegeincolorado.org	See each school's Admissions website.
	Graduate Degree	Corporate Financial Management, MBA; Finance, MBA & MS; Financial Analyst, MBA; Economic, MA; Accounting, MS; Economics, MA & PhD; Accounting, MBA; Applied Mathematics, MS, PhD; Mathematics, MS	University of Colorado-Denver, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, Colorado State University More options: collegeincolorado.org	See each school's Admissions website.

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# Denver Public Schools Sample Pathway Guide

Insurance Agent

<p><b>Cluster Overview:</b> The <b>Finance Career Cluster</b> prepares students for careers in planning, services for financial and investment planning, banking, insurance and business financial management.</p>		
Extended Learning Experiences		
<p><b>Curricular Experiences:</b></p> <p>Future Business Leaders of America Distributive Education Clubs of America National Honor Society</p>	<p><b>Extracurricular Experiences:</b></p> <p>Class Officer Speech Team Math Tutor Treasurer for student organization (in or out of school)</p>	
<p><b>Work-Based Learning Experiences:</b></p> <p>Career Preparation – Paid and Unpaid, Job Shadowing, Internships</p>	<p><b>Program Accreditation and/or Professional Association(s):</b></p> <p>Casualty Actuarial Society Global Association of Risk Professionals Health Insurance Association of America Independent Insurance Agents of America National Association of Health Underwriters Professional Liability Underwriting Society Society of Actuaries International DECA Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda</p>	
<p><b>Service Learning Experiences:</b></p> <p>Scouting organizations – Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts Future Business Leaders of America Goodwill Industries</p>		
Career Options:		Salary Range:
Certificate	Sales Agent, Insurance Claims Clerk	\$- \$\$
Associate Degree	Appraiser, Real Estate & Insurance, Claims Processing, Claims Examiner, Claims Investigator, Benefits Interviewer, Benefits Coordinator, Benefits Verifier	\$\$ - \$\$\$
Bachelor Degree	Career Teacher, Appraiser, Real Estate & Insurance, Claims Processing, Claims Examiner, Claims Investigator, Benefits Interviewer, Benefits Coordinator, Benefits Verifier	\$\$-\$\$\$\$
Graduate Degree	Actuary, Estate Planner, Contract Arbitrator, Statistician, Economist, Pension Fund Administrator	\$\$ - \$\$\$\$

• \$ = \$15-25,000; \$\$ = \$25-55,000; \$\$\$ = \$55-90,000; \$\$\$\$ = Above \$90,000

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# D214 Pathways Teacher Development Lessons Syllabus

## Utilizing Career Pathways to Assist in the Classroom or with Course Selection—Syllabus—Fall 2015

### Instructors

D214 Director of Career and Technical Education  
D214 Director of Professional Learning & Student Services  
D214 Assistant Director of Career and Technical Education

### Course Description

Career pathways are an integrated collection of programs and services intended to develop students' core academic, technical, and employability skills; provide them with continuous education, training; and place them in high-demand, high-opportunity jobs. Through this course, participants will be able to explore all 16 career clusters and pathways that will be implemented. During the course, participants will be expected to learn the 16 career clusters, participate in field experiences, and develop a lesson that aligns with Career Pathways.

### Course Calendar

Tuesday, September 8 4–7pm	FVEC Room C-102	Class 1 Introduction to Career Pathways and Resources Introduce Assignment 1
Tuesday, September 15 4–7pm	FVEC C-102	Class 2 Assignment 1 Due/Clusters Presentations
Tuesday, September 22 4–7pm	FVEC Room C-102	Class 3 Assignment 1 Due/Clusters Presentations Introduce Assignment 2
Tuesday, September 29 6:15–8:30pm	FVEC Field House	Class 4 Directions Career/College Fair
Tuesday, October 6 6:30–8:30pm	EGHS	Class 5 Career Night—Arts, Communication, & Human Services
Tuesday, October 13 4–7pm	FVEC Room C-102	Class 6 Experience Reflection and Discussion Work on Curriculum Project
Tuesday, October 20 4–7pm	FVEC Room C-102	Class 7 Curriculum Presentations



# D214 Cluster Presentation Instructions

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## Utilizing Career Pathways to Assist in the Classroom or with Course Selection

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### Assignment #1—Cluster Presentation Assignment Description

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You are to investigate your assigned set of career clusters and prepare a presentation on each of those clusters for your assigned time and date. Please plan on presentations being approximately 10–12 minutes. Format is flexible, but it must be shareable electronically with other participants in class. The minimum requirements for your presentation include an overview of:

1. Cluster, skill sets, and information on cluster careers
  - Included pathways
  - Summary of key skills and knowledge
  - Wage information
  - Job outlook
  - Work environment
2. Student Profile
  - Potential student interests (i.e. artistic, conventional, social, etc.)
  - Work styles (i.e. attention to detail, leadership, concern for others, etc.)
  - Work values of a student who would self identify with cluster (i.e., relationships, independence, achievement, etc.)
3. Sequence of K–12 course work and opportunities
  - Sequence of course work (Include specific D214 courses)
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Postsecondary education/certification opportunities
  - Include pathway opportunities and outcomes to promote success for students with varied aptitudes (prep, general, and honors)
4. Postsecondary options and career resources
  - Examples of employers and employer information linked to career cluster (traditional and nontraditional options)
  - Career advancement/progression opportunities and/or nontraditional career paths
  - Services and agencies to support student academic and career success

# D214 Cluster Presentation Instructions (cont.)

## Utilizing Career Pathways to Assist in the Classroom or with Course Selection

### Assignment #1–Cluster Presentation Assignment Rubric

	<b>Poor (1 point)</b>	<b>Good (3 points)</b>	<b>Excellent (5 points)</b>
<b>1. Cluster, skill sets, and information on cluster careers</b>	3 or fewer of 5 required elements for each assigned cluster	Minimum of 4 of 5 required elements for each assigned cluster	All required elements for each assigned cluster
<b>2. Student profile</b>	1 of 3 required elements for each assigned cluster	2 of 3 required elements for each assigned cluster	All required elements for each assigned cluster
<b>3. Sequence of K–20 coursework and opportunities</b>	1 of 3 required elements for each assigned cluster	2 of 3 required elements for each assigned cluster	All required elements for each assigned cluster
<b>4. Include pathway and outcomes to promote success for students with varied aptitudes (prep, general, and honors)</b>	1 level of student aptitude discussed	2 levels of student aptitude discussed	3 levels of student aptitude discussed
<b>5. Postsecondary options and career resources</b>	1 of 3 required elements for each assigned cluster	2 of 3 required elements for each assigned cluster	All required elements for each assigned cluster
<b>6. Presentation of material</b> •Engagement •Professionalism •Clarity •Creativity	Presentation is strong in 2 of 4 categories	Presentation is strong in 3 of 4 categories	Presentation is strong in all categories

# Whitewater USD Reflection Activity 1

---

## Matching Interests to Careers

### FOR THE TEACHER

#### Introduction

The purpose of this activity is to help students identify their interests and how they relate to career choices. It also encourages them to look beyond their preconceptions about careers and investigate alternatives they may not have considered before. Finally, students will become more familiar with Career Cruising's interest assessment tool, Career Matchmaker, and learn how it can provide individualized feedback on their career ideas.

#### Setting the Stage

Classroom discussion can focus on two issues: the relationship between people's interests and their career choices, and how much (or little) we really know about various careers. Ask students which occupations they are thinking about pursuing. Then ask them how much they know about those occupations. How do they know they will really like those careers? There are hundreds of occupations to pursue, yet many students think of only a handful when imagining their future career paths.

# Whitewater USD Reflection Activity 1 (cont.)

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## Matching Interests to Careers

### STEP 1: YOUR CAREER CHOICE

Log in to Career Cruising and click on Careers.

In the box beside **Keyword Search**, enter the name of a career you would like to pursue or have seriously considered for yourself (e.g., lawy, carpentry, fashion designing), and click Search.

Once you have chosen a career, write the name below.

Career: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Before learning more about your career choice, write down three things you think you would like about this career** (e.g., on-the-job activities, work environment, or other interesting aspects).

Note: At this stage of the activity, you do not have to do any research; just write down your thoughts on this career. In the third stage, you will learn more about this career and how it matches up with your interests.

### STEP 2: IDENTIFYING YOUR INTERESTS

Click the **Assessments** link in the menu bar at the top of the page, and then click on the **Start Matchmaker** button. (If you've already completed Matchmaker, you can load your Best Match or other results and skip ahead to Step 3.) Read the instructions on the Introduction page, label your Matchmaker session, and then click Start Now.

**After you answer the first 39 questions, you will come to the Career Suggestions page, which lists the careers that are suitable for you based on your responses to the questions.**

We strongly suggest that you answer the second round of questions as well. Click on the **Answer More Questions** button in the **Improve My Results** section on the left side of the **Career Suggestions** page. Answer as many additional questions as you can, and then click the blue **View My Career Suggestions** button.

### STEP 3: MATCHING UP YOUR INTERESTS WITH CAREERS

**1. Does your career choice appear in the list of career suggestions?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is **Yes**, click on it.

If your answer is **No**, click on the **Find Other Careers** button in the **Other Careers** section on the left side of the page. Search for the career that interests you and click on the career name.

# Whitewater USD Reflection Activity 1 (cont.)

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## Matching Interests to Careers

**2. Once you have clicked on the career, a chart titled "Suitable for You?" will appear. From this chart, write down any Central and Secondary Aspects to which you answered Like or Like Very Much.**

**3. Write down any Central and Secondary Aspects to which you answered Dislike, Dislike Very Much, or Does Not Matter.**

## STEP 4: SUMMARY–YOUR VIEWS

Now that you have learned about your interests and how they match up with a career that you have considered, answer the following questions:

**4. In Question 1, you wrote down three things that you thought you would like about this career. Which of these are similar to the Central or Secondary Aspects of the career? What surprises you about some of the aspects of this career?**

**5. How did your original career choice match up with your interests? Do you still think it is a good career choice for you? Why or why not?**

**6. Do you think interests are important for career choices? Why or why not?**

## OPTIONAL–CHECKING OUT ONE OF YOUR CAREER SUGGESTIONS

Career: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Write down the Central and Secondary Aspects to which you answered Like or Like Very Much.**

**8. Write down any Central and Secondary Aspects to which you answered Dislike, Dislike Very Much, or Does Not Matter.**

**9. Are you interested in this career? Have you ever considered it before? What could you do to learn more about it?**

# Whitewater USD Reflection Activity 2

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## Career Comparison

### FOR THE TEACHER

#### Introduction

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand which criteria are important to them as they make career decisions and why. In a side-by-side comparison of two career options, students evaluate their interest in each career, based on the following criteria: work tasks, working conditions, potential earnings, and education and training requirements. At each stage, students are asked to choose between the two occupations, based on the information available to them, and reflect on why they have made that choice.

At the end of the activity, students are asked to interpret the changes in their career choices and prioritize which of the criteria are most important to them at this stage of the career decision-making process. They are also encouraged to reflect on other possible factors that may influence their career choice and to project how their priorities may change as a result. Ultimately, students learn that career choices are not usually made on the basis of a single criterion, but instead, are influenced by multiple factors that constantly need to be reevaluated as they gain more knowledge about career options and the decision-making process.

#### Setting the Stage

Classroom discussion can focus on the decision-making process and the factors that influence the types of decisions that students make. Introduce the subject by asking students to identify factors that influence their everyday decisions, such as what to wear. Ask students about some more important decisions that they have made or are in the process of making, such as which courses to select for the following year, and how and why the factors that influence those decisions could change.

Note: We recommend that students keep two browser windows (or tabs) open when gathering the information for the side-by-side comparison. Opening each career profile in a separate window or tab will help students move through this activity more efficiently and effectively.

# Whitewater USD Reflection Activity 2 (cont.)

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## Career Comparison

Log in to Career Cruising and click on Careers. Use the Keyword Search to find two occupations that interest you but that you may not know much about. Write the names of the careers in the spaces provided at the top of every worksheet in this activity.

### Career One

### Career Two

1. If you had to pick one of these careers based only on what you know about them right now, which would you choose and why?

### Click on Job Description in each career profile. Answer the following questions:

2. What do people in these careers do? (Describe at least three typical work tasks for each career.)

3. If you had to pick one of these careers based only on the working conditions that you described, which would you choose and why?

### Click on Earnings in each career profile. Answer the following questions:

4. How much do people in each career typically earn on a yearly basis? (If annual salary figures aren't available, how much do they earn per hour or per contract?)

5. What other kinds of compensation or benefits can people in each career receive? (e.g., health and dental benefits, contributions to retirement savings plans, performance bonuses, etc.)

6. If you had to pick one of these careers based only on how much you could earn, which would you choose and why?

Click on Education in each career profile. Answer the following questions:

7. What are the education and training requirements for people in each career? (e.g., high school diploma, associate or bachelor's degree, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, additional licensing or certification, etc.)

8. Approximately how many years of training or education are required for people in each occupation?

9. If you had to pick one of these careers based only on the amount of education and training you need, which would you choose and why?

## SUMMARY—YOUR VIEWS

Did you change your mind about the career you chose at the beginning of the activity as different types of information became available to you? What new information caused you to change your mind and why?

# Champaign Community Schools Unit 4 District– Discussion Guidelines for Employer Volunteers

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## Overview

The following questions will give you an idea of what the student hopes to learn during his or her time with you. The student may be very quiet when he or she first arrives at the workplace. It can be intimidating and overwhelming to interact with adults who are not parents or teachers. The list below will give you something to talk about while the student becomes comfortable. Please feel free to add any information you feel is relevant to your career or profession.

## Career Development and Industry Trends

- Where and when did you get your start in this field?
- What is your current job description?
- What are your key work tasks?
- What are the prerequisites for your job?
- What are some entry-level job opportunities in your field?
- How is performance measured in your field?
- What are the rewards for high performance?
- What do you like and dislike about your job?
- What is your biggest work challenge?
- If you could start your career over, what would you do differently?
- What is the degree of opportunity for men and women in your field?
- What are the current employment projections for your field?
- What are your five- and ten-year career goals?

## Education

- What specific aptitudes will help someone become successful in this field?(e.g., math, science, decision-making, critical thinking, leadership, communication skills)
- Which high school courses would help someone prepare for this field?
- What kind of additional education will be needed? (e.g., technical school, community college, four-year university)
- How will additional education affect someone’s earnings, promotions, and job opportunities?

## Experience and Lifestyle

- In your field, how long does it take to be considered an “experienced” employee?
- Is experience measured by time or by performance?
- Are there activities (e.g., part-time job, clubs) that will help to develop skills in this career field?
- How has your career affected your lifestyle?
- Do you have enough time for your family, friends, and leisure activities?
- In your field, how do the benefits and rewards outweigh the stresses and challenges?



# Champaign Community Schools Unit 4 District– Mentorship Activity Suggestions

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## Overview

The following recommendations are based on successful mentoring activities completed in the past.

### 1. Industry Timeline

Mentors work with students to research past, present and future trends of a specific career or an industry of interest. Students write and summarize what they have learned about the industry and any implications on their future career and education choices. Mentors monitor the progress and the quality of the project.

### 2. “Day in the Life”

Students interview their mentors to document a “day in the life” of their current job or their previous jobs. Students and mentors discuss pros and cons of each career and any surprising findings.

### 3. Certificate or Licensing Research

If certificates or licensing credentials are necessary for certain careers, mentors can work with students to outline the steps needed to obtain a particular certificate or license. Mentors and students collectively develop a plan on how the student can obtain the credential (if the student is interested in moving forward with earning it).

### 4. Work-Simulation Projects

Mentors provide students opportunities to see examples of mentor work and/or accomplishments. If possible, they allow students to engage in solving problems or tasks directly related to their career or industry. Students and mentors discuss the skills and knowledge needed for completing the project. They collaborate on identifying high school course work that could bolster these skills.

### 5. Develop Tentative Postsecondary Plan

Toward the end of the mentorship, mentors and students debrief on what students have learned about careers and their interests. They also discuss how their perceptions of various careers have changed. Depending on students’ career interests, mentors and students draft a tentative plan based on decisions that students will need to make in the next five years in order to reach their current goals (e.g., What degree will students need? What programs should students consider? What internship opportunities could help students reach their goals?)

# Whitewater USD Capstone Presentation

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## Student Guidelines

The **Portfolio Celebration** at Whitewater High School is an opportunity for seniors to showcase their academic achievement, celebrate their accomplishments, and share their postsecondary career and academic plans before graduation. Students should prepare a dynamic 15-minute presentation highlighting the items listed below for a group of people, which will include a teacher, community member, family, and invited guests. The following outline is designed to help students organize their presentations in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

### **Part I: Introduction**

Students should introduce themselves, shake hands with members of the review team and preview highlights of the presentation. Use an attention-getter and/or reflection on this task and the purpose or thesis statement that highlights key parts of the presentation.

### **Part II: Academic Accomplishments**

Students should share two or more examples of their best work in core academic and elective areas. Use a topic sentence that introduces the first topic and describes each artifact (What are we looking at?). Share the significance of the artifact (Why it is important to you? What does it demonstrate about you and your academic success at WHS?).

### **Part III: Activities, Work Experience and Other Items**

Students should share two or more examples of their involvement in activities in and outside of school, work experiences they have had or other items. Start with a topic sentence that identifies an activity or organization or a job you have had. Describe how each artifact represents your involvement or the responsibilities you have had at your place of employment. Share the significance of the artifact and what you have gained from your experience. Other items that can be shared may include: leadership experiences, awards, certificates, photos, recordings, newspaper clippings, description of activities outside of school, evidence of hobbies, collections, trips, items that showcase strengths, interests and talents.

### **Part IV: Community Service**

Students will share at least one service activity that had special significance. Start with a topic sentence and describe the volunteer work and how it benefited the school or community.

### **Part V: Career Portfolio**

Students should describe their future career and educational plans and the pathway they have chosen to accomplish their career goals. Start with a topic sentence that identifies the final section of this presentation. Share visual images of your intended career and educational path and explain how you made those decisions.

### **Part VI: Conclusion**

Students should end their presentation by summarizing the most important learning experiences they've had in high school and how they hope to use their knowledge and skills to become a productive and responsible member of society. Consider using a quote that reflects your character. Thank the review team for participating.

# Whitewater USD Financial Planner

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## Part A: Life Plan

Career Plan	
First-Choice Career	
National Entry Wage (\$)	
Projected Jobs	
Percentage Change (%)	
Do you need a college degree for this career?	
If yes, what degree(s) will you need? What programs should you look for?	
If no, what is required to enter the career?	
Estimated Cost	

Life Goals	
Short-term (one year) career goals	
Short-term (one year) education goals	
Short-term (one year) personal goals	
Intermediate (1-5 year) career goals	
Intermediate (1-5 year) education goals	
Intermediate (1-5 year) personal goals	

# Whitewater USD Financial Planner (cont.)

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## Part B: Monthly Budget Plan

Entry-Level Career Income	
Annual Pay	
Monthly Deductibles	
Gross Pay	
<i>Retirement Plan (5%)</i>	
<i>State and Local Taxes</i>	
<i>Federal Taxes</i>	
<i>Social Security</i>	
- Total Withholdings	
= Net Pay	

Expenses	
<b>Net Pay</b>	
<i>Housing</i>	
<i>Transportation</i>	
<i>Food</i>	
<i>Personal</i>	
<i>Debt</i>	
<i>Insurance</i>	
<i>Misc</i>	
<i>Savings</i>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	

# Cross County School District Virtual Internship Guide

## Internship Plan Template Example to Be Filled Out by the Mentor

Success Criteria of the Mentorship: (1) be an impactful role model to the student (2) help him/her grow as a person and a professional by leveraging strengths to identify growth areas

<b>Aspiration:</b> Sally's aspirations are to (1) be the first in her family to graduate from college and (2) run a successful medical practice			
	<b>What</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>Strength 1</b>	Planning	She's so on top of things! I am so impressed that she read through my entire biography on my website and she always has such great questions prepared.	She's just an awesome planner, and I want her to keep up with that.
<b>Strength 2</b>	Respect for Adults	Always saying "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am"...super polite!	This is really going to help her advocate for herself when she's in college. Professors are going to respect that she's delightful in her disposition.
<b>Growth Area(s)</b>	Confidence	I noticed and Sally agreed that she's very nervous in this environment. Her nervousness comes off as under-confidence.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. These types of sessions are really going to help her. I envision she'll improve every time.</li> <li>2. The final presentation...I'm going to make sure she's extremely prepared for it. The more that you know, the more confident that you should be.</li> <li>3. We're having conversations and I am giving her feedback about ways that she can present herself in a more confident manner.</li> </ol>

# Cross County School District Virtual Internship Guide (cont.)

## Internship Plan Template Example to Be Filled Out by the Mentor

Success Criteria: The project should be (1)authentic, (2) challenging, (3)personalized with frequent feedback, (4) reasonable for everyone involved.

<b>Big Idea:</b> Sally is going to do a diagnostic report on a deceased patient who died of an undetermined skin condition in 2010. Sally is going to learn as much about dermatology as possible and then create a diagnostic report about what Jane Doe may have died of.			
Stage	What is the intern learning?	What is the intern producing?	Time Frame
<b>Early Phase</b>	All about dermatology. In order to produce a comprehensive report, she's going to have to have a background in the science and a knowledge of different diseases.	She's reading my book plus studying 100 medical terminology vocabulary words. We'll talk through both of those things on the following chat.	All of Feb.
<b>Middle Phase</b>	How to diagnose a patient. On a video-chat, we're going to discuss how I go about diagnosing a patient. How I process the symptoms, what is important to remember and what isn't, and how to expresses diagnoses in a succinct manner.	Sally has to come back having studied 25 skin diseases. I've asked her to research the 25 most common diseases and write out their causes, symptoms, and remedies.	First half of March
<b>Late Phase</b>	I will introduce Sally to the Jane Doe case. Jane Doe died of an unknown disease before we could get to her. She'll use critical thinking skills to try to answer this problem.	Sally is going to study the case, perform research, perform consultations, and then participate in a diagnostic meeting with a med student and myself where we'll push each other on what could've killed Jane Doe.	Second half of March
<b>Final Project</b>	How to think through a problem; how to diagnose a patient; how to save a life	Sally is going to give a presentation displaying what she feels to be the top three potential diseases which killed Jane Doe.	All of April



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