

6 Benefits of Prioritizing K-12 Career Readiness

The implementation of career readiness programs and plans in K-12 education varies across states, districts, and schools. However, there's been a growing emphasis on career, college, and life readiness¹ as well as career pathways in education policy discussions and initiatives.² With this shift, many school districts have been working to incorporate career-focused education into their strategic priorities to better prepare students for life after graduation.

This infographic shares six reasons to prioritize career readiness in school districts.

EASE THE GRADUATION TO OCCUPATION TRANSITION

Prepare students for a smooth transition from graduation to the workforce, reducing the stress of adapting after they leave high school. Career-focused guidance and an emphasis on 21st-century competency development ensure students have a clear roadmap and the skills needed to succeed, leading to an increased chance of students reaching their full potential.³



SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING AND SUCCESS

When students graduate with the competencies and mindset needed to adapt and persevere in any situation, they're not just prepared for their next step – they're set up for a fulfilling lifelong journey. Strong career-readiness foundations empower students to navigate diverse career paths, showcase grit and perseverance to achieve their goals in the face of challenges, continually learn, and adapt in a rapidly changing world.



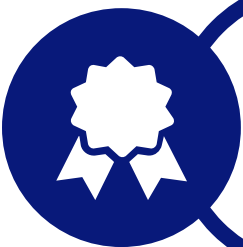
INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH REAL WORLD APPLICATION

By emphasizing career readiness, education becomes more relevant as students see how classroom lessons relate to real-world scenarios. Practical experiences and real-world applications bridge the gap between theory and practice, boosting student engagement and motivation.⁴



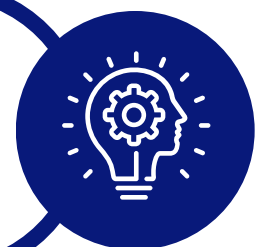
IMPROVE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES AND EQUITY

When districts implement career readiness initiatives, their students can thrive. Well-designed career and college readiness pathways can have a significantly positive impact on students from historically marginalized communities and students with low achievement scores in earlier grades when they participate in high school college and career readiness programs.⁵



FOSTER AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Embracing career readiness encourages the development of competencies like innovation and creative problem-solving. These in turn help instill an entrepreneurial mindset in students. Students equipped with an entrepreneurial spirit may be more likely to identify opportunities, take calculated risks, and contribute to economic growth.⁶



NURTURE 21ST CENTURY COMPETENCIES

Equip students with critical skills like communication, collaboration, and problem-solving that are essential for thriving in our modern world. These skills cultivate adaptability, helping students embrace change and seize opportunities in an ever-evolving job market.



The Outcome: Empowered Graduates Ready to Soar

By supporting career readiness, school districts not only prepare students for established career paths but also encourage them to forge their own. Students emerge equipped with skills, insights, and connections to tackle the challenges they'll face after graduation.

¹ National College and Career Readiness Indicators, "About Us," September 5, 2023, www.redefiningready.org

² US Department of Education, "U.S. Department of Education Launches New Initiative to Support Career-Connected Learning and Increase Job Pathways for Young Americans," November 14, 2022 <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-launches-new-initiative-support-career-connected-learning-and-increase-job-pathways-young-americans>

³ Krista Mattern et al., "Broadening the Definition of College and Career Readiness: A Holistic Approach," Act Research Report Series 5 (2014): 5 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED555591.pdf>

⁴ K-12 Dive, "Let's Get Real: Increase Student Engagement with Experiential Learning," April 24, 2023 <https://www.k12dive.com/spons/lets-get-real-increase-student-engagement-with-experiential-learning/647776/>

⁵ Gary Hoachlander, "Building a System of College and Career Pathways in New Mexico," Learning Policy Institute, February 19, 2021, <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/new-mexico-college-career-pathways-report>

⁶ Martin Lackeus, "Entrepreneurship in Education: What, Why, When, How," OECD (2015), https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/BGP_Entrepreneurship-in-Education.pdf