



## **New Survey: 95% of Americans Want More Opportunities for High-School Students to Learn Real-World Skills**

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Three of four identify middle and high school as the right time to explore possible career paths

HERNDON, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun. 13, 2017-- The vast majority of Americans believe U.S. high school students should have more opportunities to learn real-world skills in the classroom, highlighting a national preference among parents and the general population for experiential, career-focused learning opportunities over traditional forms of education.

The results of the national survey of more than 1,000 members of the U.S. general public are detailed in the report "State of the Skills Gap: Perceptions of the role high school plays in preparing students for success in career," released today by Edge Research and K12 Inc.

"On the same day the President of the United States is talking about the importance of career training and apprenticeships, the 'State of the Skills Gap' survey provides us with a deeper understanding of the public's views of the skills gap and, most importantly, its causes and potential solutions," said Stuart Udell, CEO of K12.

During a visit to Waukesha County Technical College in Wisconsin Tuesday, President Donald Trump is to promote apprenticeships as an alternative entry point to careers that do not require a college degree. The "State of the Skills Gap" survey suggests students should be exposed to alternatives even earlier.

"It's clear from this research that the American people think students should be seriously considering their career paths in high school if not earlier," Udell said, "and that those students should have access to a wide variety of courses that will expose them to different jobs and give them the real-world skills they'll need to succeed in them."

Key findings of the survey include:

- 95 percent of Americans agree that all U.S. high school students should have more opportunities to learn real-world skills and study programs like manufacturing, IT, business management and health care.
- 82 percent of respondents say young people and those entering the workforce today are not equipped with the skills they need to succeed in the jobs available.
- Only 12 percent of Americans give their high school an "A" grade in preparing them for the job they are doing right now. Half of respondents gave their high school a "C," "D" or "F" grade.
- Parents want their children to come out of high school with a mix of soft and hard skills, including critical thinking skills, real-world skills needed for a job, communication skills and computer skills.
- 76 percent of Americans say middle or high school is the right time to start exploring possible career options, compared to just 7 percent who say college is the right time.
- 56 percent of parents said two years of work experience is more valuable than a four-year liberal arts degree, compared to 16% who said the degree would be more valuable.

The survey also explored perceptions of Career Technical Education (CTE), which consists of elective courses designed to expose students to career pathways and equip them with the knowledge and skills required for in-demand jobs. It found overwhelming support for expanding access to CTE options for all high-school students, whether they plan to start a career or continue their education in college.

Key findings related to CTE include:

- 90 percent of Americans agree that CTE should be offered in every high school in America, with nearly universal support (98%) among families with direct experience taking CTE courses.
- 87 percent of parents said they wished they had had the opportunity to take CTE in school.
- 96 percent of parents said CTE is a good option for students who want to start a career immediately after high school, with 88 percent saying CTE is a good option for students who are college-bound.
- 88 percent of Americans said CTE will help fill demand for highly skilled workers, while 69 percent said the United States won't have enough workers in high-growth sectors such as health care and engineering without CTE.
- 79 percent of parents are interested in CTE courses and programs that combine online learning with in-class instruction, with nearly all (93 percent) agreeing that online learning is a good option for career training because it is more up-to-date and flexible.

The full "State of the Skills Gaps" report is available online at <http://www.k12.com/career-technical-education.html>

### **About K12 Inc.**

K12 Inc. (NYSE: LRN) is driving innovation and advancing the quality of education by delivering state-of-the-art, digital learning platforms and

technology to students and school districts across the globe. K12's curriculum serves over 2,000 schools and school districts and has delivered more than four million courses over the past decade. K12 is a company consisting of thousands of online school educators providing instruction, academic services, and learning solutions to public schools and districts, traditional classrooms, blended school programs, and directly to families. The K12 program is offered through K12 partner public schools in 33 states and the District of Columbia, and through private schools serving students in all 50 states and more than 100 countries. More information can be found at [K12.com](http://k12.com).

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