

## Are Your Students Future-Ready?

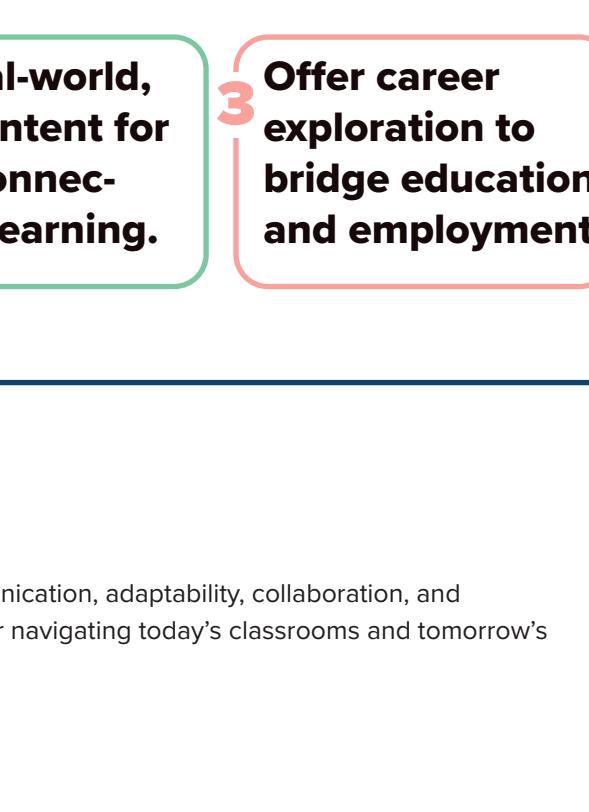
Prepare students for today, tomorrow, and whatever comes next.

### Many students worry about their future.

- They feel education hasn't kept up with tomorrow's job market.
- They wish they had better resources to prepare for life after graduation.
- They yearn for greater access to real-world content, career tools, and exposure to potential career paths.<sup>i</sup>

And most educators share these concerns...

### Education is not evolving to meet future workplace needs.



To close this concerning gap, schools must focus on three priorities:

**1 Develop transferable skills for success in any post-graduation path.**

**2 Provide real-world, relevant content for personal connections with learning.**

**3 Offer career exploration to bridge education and employment.**

### Developing Transferable Skills

Students need strong interpersonal skills to thrive—like communication, adaptability, collaboration, and problem-solving. These human-centered skills are essential for navigating today's classrooms and tomorrow's evolving workforce.

#### Fast Facts

**#1 Skill**  
Parents, teachers, and superintendents agree that life skills are the most important for future success.

**There is a 25% gap**  
between how important students feel communication skills are and how they rate the quality of instruction for communication skills.

**Only 60–71%**  
of students and teachers believe schools effectively teach essential life skills.

#### Did you know?

**About 95%**  
cite critical thinking or problem-solving as essential.  
Other common skills include adaptability and collaboration.

**Approximately 90%**  
of districts identify communication as a key *Portrait of a Graduate* skill.

**95%**

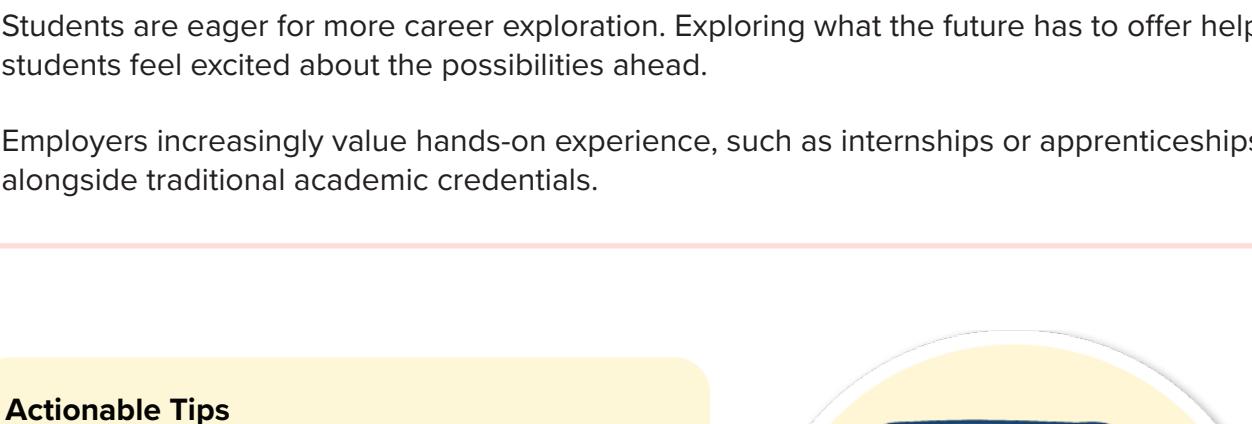
**Why It Matters**  
Employers value "soft skills" as much as technical expertise. In 2023, the most in-demand traits in new hires were **communication, flexibility, and critical thinking**.  
Transferable skills are a key component of many **Portrait of a Graduate** frameworks nationwide, as districts agree that fostering these skills and attributes prepares students for success in school, life, and future careers.<sup>ii</sup>

#### Actionable Tip

- Practice Building Transferable Skills within Existing Teaching and Learning:**  
Use group projects and debates to build interpersonal skills.
- Model and Reinforce the Value of Interpersonal Skills:**  
Teachers can model adaptability and a growth mindset during instruction and daily interactions.
- Make Time to Practice Soft Skills in Later Grades:**  
Even older students need practice navigating relationships. Upper-grade teachers can provide opportunities for negotiation and problem-solving peers.

#### A Deeper Look

Middle school teachers rate developing communication and collaboration skills as the most challenging. These skills were not reported as a top challenge in other grade bands.



### Actionable Tip

- Embed Real-World Relevance:**  
Design lessons that connect academic concepts to future careers. By aligning student interests with careers, they are better able to conceptualize how the skills they learn today will have meaning in the future.

### Actionable Tips

- Connect with Professionals:** Invite industry experts into classrooms for experiences. Leverage virtual platforms to connect students with far-away industry professionals for interactive workshops and career talks.

- Establish Long-Term Partnerships with Local Businesses and Organizations:** Many local and national organizations are eager to work with students and teachers to help develop skills for their respective industries.

**Why It Matters**  
Students are eager for more career exploration. Exploring what the future has to offer helps students feel excited about the possibilities ahead.  
Employers increasingly value hands-on experience, such as internships or apprenticeships, alongside traditional academic credentials.

**Did you know?**  
Parents cite lack of interest or motivation as the #2 reason for students missing school, second only to health issues.

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