

# COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS, PART II

On May 11, WASDA and Baird hosted the second in a series of discussions among K–12 educators, business leaders and college entrance officials on what it means to be college- or career-ready in 2017. Their observations and insights are summarized below.

## WHAT ATTRIBUTES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF FROM RECENT GRADUATES?

- The ability to evaluate data and come to a sound, informed decision
- The flexibility to adapt to changes in technology or direction
- A better understanding of general business practices
- Good judgment and common sense
- The courage to fail
- Curiosity – to be involved enough to ask “why,” instead of just accepting what is in front of them
- Self-sufficiency – the drive to put forth the work needed to find an answer

## WHAT FACTORS LEAD STUDENTS AND NEW EMPLOYEES TO FAILURE?

- Poor time management
- Math, reading and comprehension skills that are not at the desired level
- Enrolling in a four-year college program when a two-year or technical program might be more appropriate
- A lack of clarity surrounding personal long-term goals
- Unrealistic expectations around responsibilities and salary
- Job search skills (such as résumé and cover letter creation) that could be enhanced

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In school, students are typically asked to differentiate between “right answers” and “wrong answers.” In the real world, it’s not that clear-cut. We need employees who are self-directed enough to come up with an informed decision independently and who exercise good judgment.

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Young adults don’t actually know WHY they’re pursuing the jobs they have or what else might be out there.

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## WHAT ARE SCHOOLS DOING RIGHT?

- Dual-enrollment programs that encourage higher-achieving students to apply for college credits, potentially helping them finish their college programs early
- STEM academies and programs that are focused on particular areas of learning and education
- Job fairs and career days that feature professionals from various industries
- Exposing middle- and even elementary-school students to alternative careers they didn't know existed
- A sufficiently broad curriculum that prepares students for multiple internships
- Encouraging students to look at an industry instead of a specialized role

## WHAT COULD K–12 SCHOOLS DO MORE OF?

- Teaching students to recognize the connectedness of their actions – how theories learned in school can be applied to real-world situations
- Helping students feel more confident about themselves and what they learned
- Adopting current and relevant technology for their students
- Challenging students to embrace ambiguity and change

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By October of junior year, many college students are either required or strongly encouraged to commit to internships within their program.

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How prepared – and financially equipped – are educators to keep up with advancements in industrial technology?

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### PANELISTS

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Sarah Brennan, Cornerstone On Demand

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