


COMPLETION WITH A PURPOSE: Consumer-Driven Education and Training Policy

A “How To” Playbook for America’s Governors





**A BETTER CONSUMER-
FOCUSED SYSTEM
WOULD CREATE A
SEAMLESS FLOW:**

**WE CAN GET TO
THIS DYNAMIC.**

TO DO SO, WE NEED TO BETTER
UNDERSTAND THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE
AND THEIR NEEDS TODAY.

Navigating

People want to be oriented to where they are relative to where they want to go at the time that they want to make that transition. They need to understand their options so they can make informed decisions about the pathways they pursue.

Funding

Learners and workers need funding models that facilitate on- and off-ramps between education and work, including portable benefits, lifelong learning dollars, and transparent funding mechanisms that align funding to outcomes and returns.

Opening doors

Learners need to find new job opportunities aligned to their skills and experience and be hired based on their capabilities. This gives employers and jobseekers confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the hiring process.

Endorsement

People need validation of their diverse learning experiences—whether book-taught or life-learned—and ways to package those skills so they can effectively and consistently communicate and translate what they can do to prospective employers.

Precision learning + support

Learners need precision education and comprehensive support services: tailored, just-in-time, and experiential learning experiences married with human and tech-enabled 360-degree supports that eliminate barriers to learning.



CONSUMERS' NEEDS:

RELEVANCE AND VALUE

While connectivity to employment and relevance to career opportunities are valued most by a majority of current and prospective students, these characteristics are too often absent from the educational experience.



50+%

of Americans say a good job or career was their main reason for postsecondary education.

Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. Base: U.S. adults 18-65 with some postsecondary education, n=205,010



NEARLY 50%

of Americans feel the need for more education to advance their careers.

Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. Base: U.S. adults 18-65 in the workforce, n=270,750



FEWER THAN 6 in 10

college students complete within six years

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

is the chief motivator for adults considering returning to school.

Guaranteed employment outcome (a job placement or wage increase)



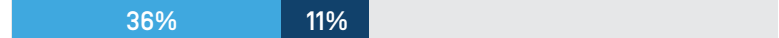
Free community college tuition



Courses and training that fit your schedule



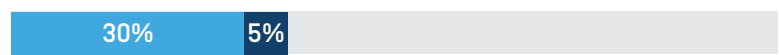
Low-cost tuition



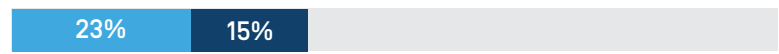
Courses and training that employers need



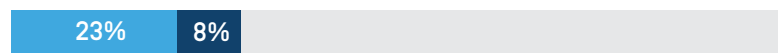
Locally accessible education and learning center



Quality online and distance learning opportunities



Resources and support for child and dependent care



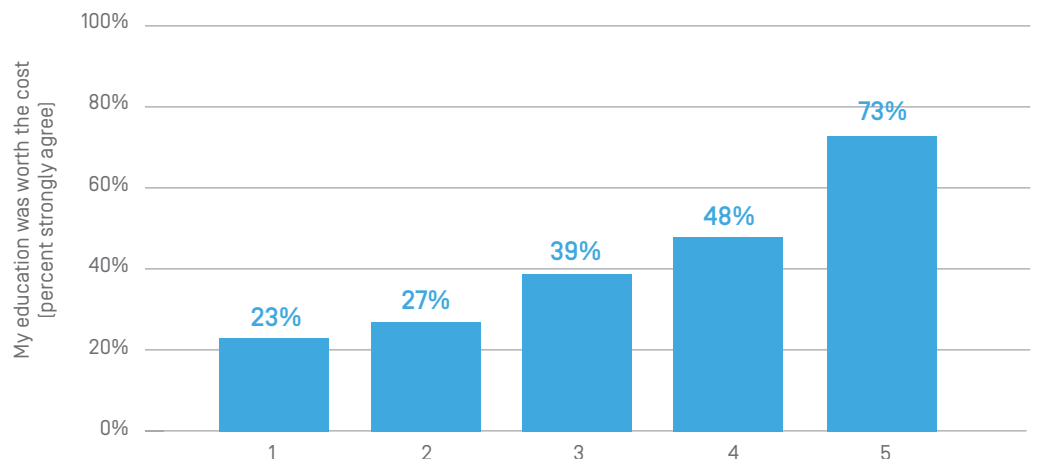
■ 5 "A great deal"
■ 4

Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. Base: U.S. adults 18-65 with less than an associate degree and who are not currently enrolled, n=7,144

RELEVANCE IS LINKED TO VALUE

The courses I took are directly relevant to my work

1=strongly disagree
5=strongly agree



Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. Base: U.S. Adults 18-65 with some postsecondary education, currently in the workforce (n=198,679)

EMPLOYERS' NEEDS:

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

12%

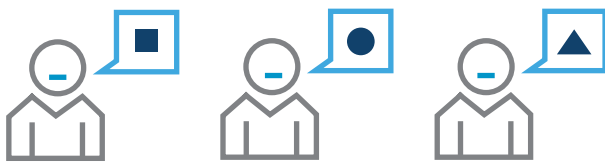
of **Americans** strongly agree that college graduates in this country are well-prepared for success in the workplace

11%

of **business leaders** strongly agree that graduating students have the skills and competencies their businesses need

95%

of Chief Academic Officers rate their institution as very or somewhat effective at **preparing students for the world of work**



Employers are frustrated. Consumers are frustrated. Educators are frustrated. Often, all are describing the same needed skills—like leadership, communication and problem-solving—but they're rarely speaking the same language.

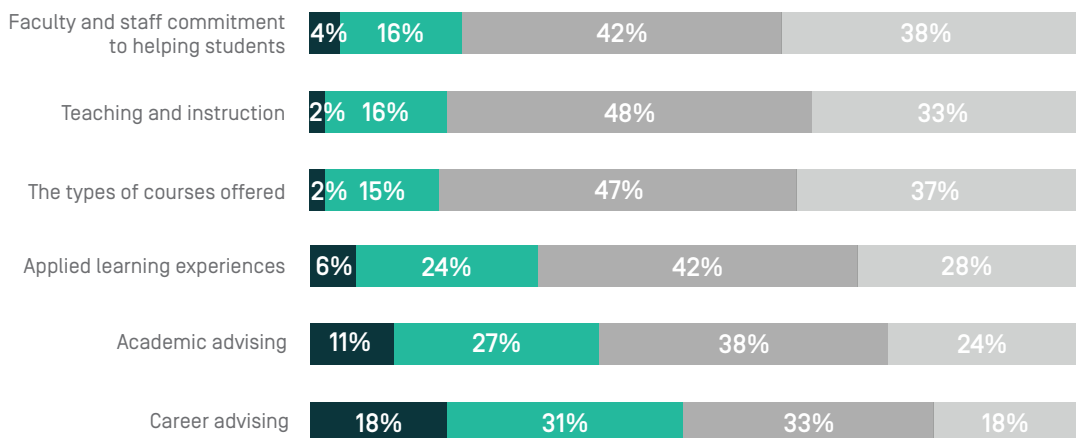
Employers value both technical and uniquely human skills, the mix of which a solid liberal arts education can provide.



Hiring and managing professionals place priority on a job applicant's interpersonal and technical skills, their interview presentation, and previous work experience.



Even among students who completed a bachelor's degree, **Career Advising is the weakest link**



Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. Base: U.S. adults age 18-65 who have completed a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, n=15,056

Closing the Gap:

WHAT YOUR STATE CAN DO RIGHT NOW

The new learning ecosystem is one that truly links educators and employers, makes learning relevant and accessible to today's learners, and uses real-time data to give students more purposeful pathways to lifelong success. This playbook is designed to help governors and state-level leaders tailor strategies to create a truly consumer-centered system that prioritizes experiential learning, aligns to the funding needs of today's student, and more holistically supports adult learners to develop the skills they need to compete in the 21st century.

EVERY LEARNER MUST HAVE MEANINGFUL, RELEVANT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AS A PART OF THEIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

WHY: The old model of education, where first you learn and then you earn, simply no longer reflects the needs of secondary or postsecondary students preparing for increasingly long and varied careers. Schools, higher education institutions, and employers must work together to ensure every learner in every state is both enrollable and employable, with access to work-based learning opportunities that provide the human and technical skills driving the economy.

HOW:

- Use existing controls to ensure your education outcomes align to better career outcomes, including higher education program approval/ processes, outcome- and performance-based funding for secondary and postsecondary institutions, and better use of discretionary (Governor's set-aside, Perkins, TANF) federal workforce funding.
- Use economic development incentives, grant funding, and other state tools directed at employers to incentivize them to provide work-based learning opportunities for more learners and remove state policy barriers, such as overly restrictive child labor provisions and complex CTE program approval processes, that disincentivize them from hiring interns or student workers.
- Make a meaningful work experience or project-based learning a requirement for every high school graduate.

IDENTIFY AND INVEST IN INNOVATIVE FUNDING MODELS THAT BETTER ALIGN TO THE NEEDS OF 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

WHY: Today's working adult will spend a lifetime moving between work and education, with the disruption caused by technology and automation forcing workers to continually upskill throughout their careers. Most state and federal resources to help consumers acquire the skills they need are rigidly designed for a 20th century learn-once-then-earn educational experience, and states must find and support tools that give modern consumers more direct control over their funding.

HOW:

- Set aside state funding to pilot education savings and portable worker training accounts that give consumers greater control to purchase the training and education they find most valuable.
- Give employers more control over training dollars to incentivize the development of more intentional in-house talent programs and more meaningful education-employer partnerships designed around the skills employers actually value.
- Support innovative postsecondary financial aid structures that make lifelong learning easier and incentivize experiential learning across disciplines.

“ Hiring and managing professionals place priority on a job applicant's **personal and technical skills, their interview presentation, and previous work experience.** Beyond considering college rankings, students should consider what colleges do to **develop the skills and experiences that employers value.** ”

Carol D'Amico, Strada Education Network

“ We are already leaving behind a significant swath of our population, who are **not prepared for a shifting job market** and who are **not well served by traditional colleges** that expect learners to stop their lives and come to campus for long periods of time. ”

Michelle Weise, Strada Institute for the Future of Work

USE CROSS-AGENCY RESOURCES, BRAIDED FUNDING STREAMS, AND CO-ENROLLMENT ACROSS FEDERAL AND STATE PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE THE SUPPORT SERVICES ADULT LEARNERS NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL

WHY: The inherent silos of government agencies all too often result in compliance-centric, rather than consumer-centric, program delivery. New flexibilities in federal law and more creative use of state funding give policymakers an opportunity to help more adult learners better leverage the many supports and wrap-around services already available to them in a more coordinated way

HOW:

- Use your state workforce plan to braid more resources and programs across the education and training pipeline, directing resources to better support career pathways that reflect real demand and addressing real-life barriers, like healthcare or childcare, that keep people on the sidelines.
- Consolidate constituent intake across programs by creating a “record of records” for all government services, and move as many programs and services onto one case management system as possible to ensure real data sharing and streamlined constituent support.
- Fund and support adult education models that think beyond high school equivalencies and make industry-recognized credentials and technical certificates, along with meaningful employment, the benchmark for success.

“ Students are telling us they feel **underprepared to enter the workforce** while employers bemoan the skills of recent graduates. That **signals demand for new career advising and work-relevant learning models** that support more successful transitions from education to employment. ”

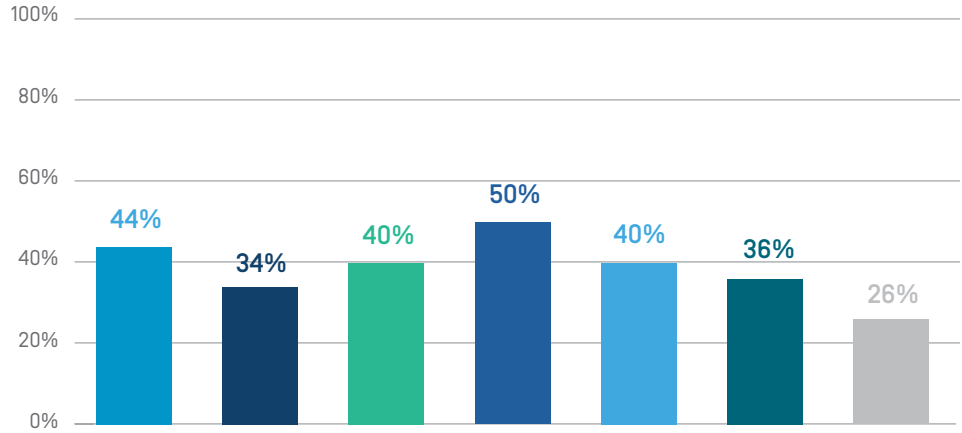
William D. Hansen
Strada Education Network

UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATION CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

A CLOSER LOOK: OHIO

PERCEIVED NEED FOR ADDITIONAL EDUCATION: By Attainment Level

- Less than HS
- High School or GED
- Stopped Out
- Vocational/Technical
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate Degree

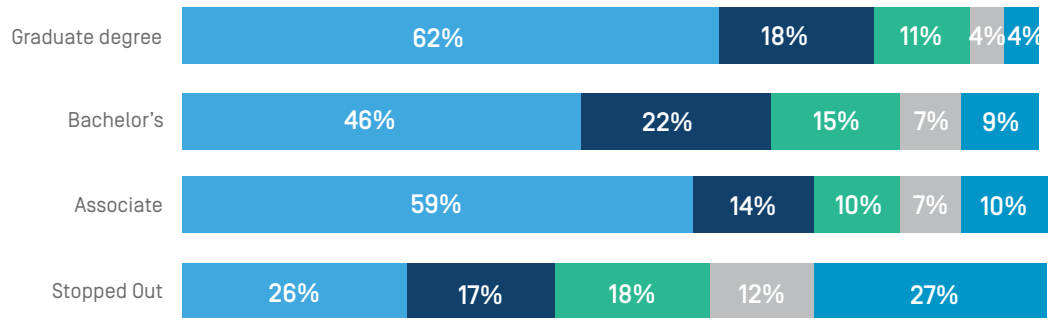


Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. Base: Ohio residents age 18-65, not currently enrolled, n=11,127

COST VALUE: By Attainment Level

My education was worth the cost

- 5 "Strongly agree"
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 "Strongly disagree"

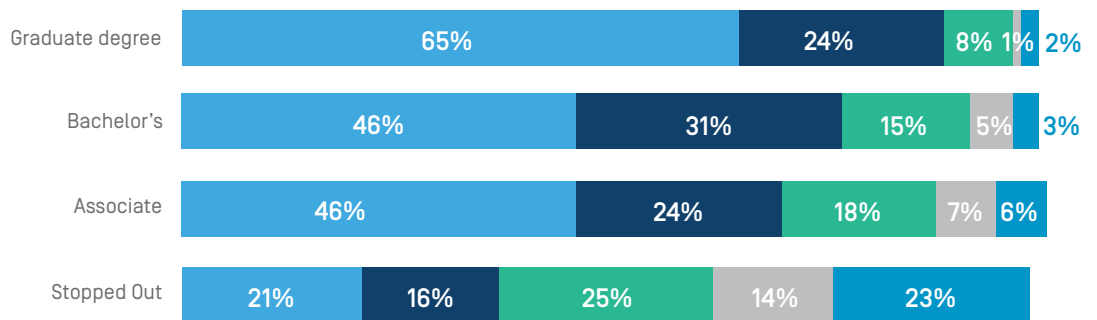


Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. Base: Alumni of Ohio public institutions of higher education, not currently enrolled, n=3,851

CAREER VALUE: By Attainment Level

My education makes me an attractive candidate to potential employers

- 5 "Strongly agree"
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 "Strongly disagree"



Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey. Base: Alumni of Ohio public institutions of higher education, not currently enrolled, n=3,851

EMSI LABOR MARKET ANALYTICS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOUISIANA TALENT

Digital skills are key to growth in the Pelican State

518
THOUSAND

With close to **518,000** unique **IT and math**-related jobs listed in 2018 alone, the diverse economy of Louisiana leans heavily upon occupations that demand **digital skills**.



In fact, these high-tech occupations rank **#3** in state-wide demand and account for more than **14% of all job listings** in Louisiana.



Beyond jobs focused on IT, however, **demand for digital skills is growing** across the entire job market, even in industries and occupations outside traditional STEM fields.



Despite high demand, many of these **skills remain difficult for employers to find** within the state's talent base.



Upskilling the current workforce with hard-to-find digital skills, like those in the following chart, will be a crucial step toward helping Louisiana's economy thrive.

HARD TO FIND SKILLS FOR NEW ORLEANS METROPOLITAN AREA

Category: Digital Skills

Occupation Types	Key, Hard-to-Find Skill Sets	Difficulty* of Finding Relevant Talent with These Skills
Business and Financial Analysis	Business Intelligence & Data Visualization	
	On Premise Data Management	
Data Management	Data Warehousing/Modeling	
	On Premise Data Management	
Data Science/Analytics	AI/Machine Learning	
	Analytics & Data Science	
Information Security	Application Security	
	Cloud / Information Security	
	Cyber Security	
	Data Warehousing/Modeling	
IT Networks and Systems	Cyber Security	
Marketing/PR	Analytics & Data Science	
	Digital Marketing	
Software Development and Programming	Cloud Computing	
	Data Warehousing/Modeling	

*Difficulty is calculated based on the degree of demand for a key skill to a given career (within a database of job listings) vs. the degree to which that skill appears in the resumés and professional profiles that are relevant to that career (within a database of professional profiles).

HARD **HARDER** **HARDEST**

SUCCESSFUL STATE APPROACHES

INDIANA'S GRADUATION PATHWAYS

For Indiana leaders, one of the keys to aligning education and workforce needs is to ensure that every high school student is both enrollable and employable by the time they graduate. As a result, Graduation Pathways were created in 2018 to move Hoosier students away from a reliance on high-stakes testing, better connect secondary and postsecondary education and training, and give students and parents choices when it comes to getting the education that's right for their goals. That means giving students the opportunity to design their own learning pathways, moving away from a one-size-fits-all system in favor of allowing students to meet benchmarks in employability and postsecondary readiness en route to a high school diploma.

- **Work, Project, or Service Based learning** are now a component of every student's educational experience.
- **Locally-created pathways developed collaboratively** by employers, schools, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations to tailor education-to-career pathways that align to local workforce need.
- **Individualized graduation requirements** give students the chance to choose educational options that best meet their postsecondary and career goals.
- **No more standardized graduation qualifying exams** that push too many students into remedial courses, preventing them from taking classes that would help prepare them for college and career after high school.

<https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/graduation-pathways/guidance-document.pdf>

RHODE ISLAND'S WESTERLY EDUCATION CENTER

When it comes to aligning education and training with real workforce need, Rhode Island's efforts can best be described as true private-public partnership. There is no better example than the Westerly Education Center, a comprehensive one-stop shop training facility where direct private investment and employer partnership is resulting in workforce preparation designed to meet current and future economic need. With anchor employer tenants working hand-in-hand with the Community College of Rhode Island and other training providers, the Center leverages private and public resources to educate and retrain thousands of adults for high-wage, high-demand jobs in the state's fastest growing sectors.

- **All higher education institution in the state**, along with state agencies and employer partners, are represented in the partnership.
- **Hands-on training designed by employer partners** combine experiential learning with

<https://www.westerlyedcenter.org/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND TOOLS

EMSI/Strada Institute for the Future of Work: 2030 Jobs Report

Strada Consumer Insights: What Education Consumers Want

Strada Institute for the Future of Work: Robot Ready Report

Strada Consumer Insights: Why Higher Ed Report

Strada Institute for the Future of Work: The Permanent Detour

Aspen Institute: Designing Portable Benefits

Aspen Institute: Future of Work Initiative, State Policy Agenda

ABOUT STRADA EDUCATION NETWORK

Strada Education Network® is a national nonprofit dedicated to improving lives by forging clearer and more purposeful pathways between education and employment. We engage partners across education, nonprofits, business, and government to focus relentlessly on students' success throughout all phases of their working lives.

Learn more about how Strada Education Network is listening to education consumers and compiling the nation's largest database of consumer insights on education experiences after high school, as well as collecting insights from employers, alumni, and current college students.

Visit stradaeducation.org

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These data sets are based on nearly three years of surveys conducted daily by Gallup, in partnership with Strada Education Network, in order to capture the consumer voice of higher education experiences. The polls were conducted on a national scale and have not been conducted solely at the state level.