



TO: Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Donlynn Rice, Administrator Curriculum and Instruction
Rich Katt, Director Career and Technical Education

SUBJECT: Adopt the Nebraska Career Readiness Standards

Proposed Board Action:

Adopt the Nebraska Career Readiness Standards

Background Information:

The Nebraska Department of Education held a Career Readiness Summit in November of 2009. The Summit was attended by over 100 business and industry representatives, secondary and postsecondary educators and administrators. The outcome of the session was the development of a definition of a career ready person and an outline of proposed career readiness standards. These standards were published in a document in December of 2009.

The proposed standards were submitted to 34 secondary schools representing the diversity of size and geography in Nebraska. Three community colleges also provided input. The proposed standards were shared with numerous business and industry representatives representing various sizes and types of businesses representing the entire state of Nebraska. The standards were also reviewed by human resources professionals through their professional organizations.

The final document represents the culmination of input received. Changes were made to clarify the standards and make certain they represent the employability skills Nebraska employers are seeking in their potential employees. The revised document was again reviewed by numerous individuals representing school and business/industry.

It was interesting to learn the number one concern from business and industry and especially the human resource professionals was the topic of cultural competency. As the Nebraska workforce continues to diversify, this area has increased as a topic of concern. It is defined broader than just racial or ethnic differences and includes an understanding of different socio-economic factors as well.

The standards are not intended to be developed into a specific class, but rather to be infused across the entire curriculum in K-14 education. Primary focus will be grades 6-14. Once approved, NDE will proceed with the development of a guide to assist schools and colleges with implementation strategies.

We have also partnered with the Nebraska Department of Labor and Department of Corrections in the development of these standards. Our goal is assist both agencies with the use of the standards to assist with job-seekers and the reintegration of offenders back into society. The attached document, College and Career - Nebraska Career Readiness Standards, identifies the draft standards and further explains each one.

Estimated Cost:

None

Supporting Documentation Included:

College and Career - Nebraska Career Readiness Standards

For Additional Information on this item:

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NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION



Preparation for College & Career

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice



12.07.11 State Board of Education Work Session

DRAFT: Pending Nebraska State Board of Education Approval

12.08.11 State Board of Education

2.7-3
&
7.6-3

The Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice are an outgrowth of the Nebraska Summit on Career Readiness held November 3rd and 4th, 2009 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the countless individuals, schools, businesses and industries that contributed to the creation and preparation of this document.

A detailed report of the Nebraska Summit on Career Readiness can be found at: www.education.ne.gov/nce/Standards.html



Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice

The Nebraska Career Readiness Standards describe varieties of expertise that educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. These standards rest on important “practices and proficiencies” with long-standing importance in career education. These standards and related practices are not limited to formal CTE programs nor to the middle school or high school level. Rather, these standards and practices should be used over and over again with increasing complexity and relevance by students as they progress through their educational pathway. The standards themselves do not dictate curriculum, pedagogy or delivery of content. Schools and colleges may handle the teaching and assessing of these standards in many different ways.

The Nebraska Career Readiness Standards were derived from extensive input from business and industry representatives expressing the most critical skills needed for employee and/or entrepreneur success. The standards were developed in conjunction with the National Career Clusters Framework. The Career Cluster Framework has been developed over the past decade with input from national business and industry committees representing the 16 comprehensive Career Clusters. In short, the Nebraska Career Readiness Standards provide a valid source of workplace expectations for all students to be career ready.



“A career ready person capitalizes on personal strengths, talents, education and experiences to bring value to the workplace and the community through his/her performance, skill, diligence, ethics and responsible behavior.”

— Definition of career readiness adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education on May 5, 2010.

The following standards are provided as a resource to assist schools, colleges, teachers and faculty members in defining curricular and assessment outcomes. The benchmarks are provided as examples and are neither exhaustive nor conclusive. Educators are encouraged to work with local business and industry councils to define learning objectives most appropriate for their situation. A crosswalk to Nebraska's academic standards will be completed in the future.

This document is organized by:

Standard (numeric)

Benchmark Topic (alpha)

AND

Sample Performance Indicators (numeric)

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice

The career ready individual...



1. Applies appropriate academic and technical skills



2. Communicates effectively and appropriately



3. Contributes to employer and community success



4. Makes sense of problems and perseveres in solving them



5. Uses critical thinking



6. Demonstrates innovation and creativity



7. Models ethical leadership and effective management



8. Works productively in teams and demonstrates cultural competency



9. Utilizes technology



10. Manages personal career development



11. Attends to personal and financial well-being



Nebraska Career Education

The career ready individual...

1. Applies appropriate academic and technical skills



A. Academic Attainment

1. Demonstrates proficiency in the academic core standards. (Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, Social Studies).
2. Reads and comprehends written material in a variety of forms and levels of complexity.
3. Completes secondary courses to meet high school graduation requirements.
4. Assimilates and applies new learning, knowledge and skills.

B. Technical Skill Attainment

1. Identifies the training, education and certification requirements for entrance and advancement in a chosen occupation.
2. Completes a career and technical education program of study.
3. Passes certification tests to qualify for licensure and/or certification in a chosen occupational area.

C. Strategic Thinking

1. Practices reasoning and systems-level thinking to deal with varied concepts and complexity.
2. Analyzes elements of a problem situation to develop solutions.
3. Uses acquired academic and technical skills to improve a situation or process.
4. Seeks to enhance knowledge and skills through ongoing professional development.

Academic skills and technical skills complement one another. A career ready individual applies these skills in a strategic manner to accomplish workplace tasks.



The career ready individual...

2. Communicates effectively and appropriately

Expressing ideas, providing instruction, informing others, sharing knowledge and providing customer service are critical in a career.

A. Speaking

1. Asks pertinent questions to acquire or confirm information.
2. Demonstrates interpretation of verbal and non-verbal messages in a conversation.
3. Converses with diverse individuals in an all-inclusive manner to foster positive relationships.
4. Practices active and attentive listening skills.

B. Writing

1. Produces clear and coherent written communication in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
2. Composes focused written documents such as: agendas, audio-visu-als, bibliographies, drafts, e-mails, forms, notes, oral presentations, reports, and technical documents.
3. Constructs a well-reasoned position, based on an openness to new information and ideas, to support a theory or validate a point of view.

C. Presentations

1. Prepares presentations to provide information for specific purposes and audiences.
2. Delivers presentations that sustain listeners' attention and interest.
3. Uses technology appropriately to effectively present information.



Nebraska Career Education

The career ready individual...

2. Communicates effectively and appropriately



continued...

D. Professional Etiquette

1. Uses professional etiquette and observes social protocols when communicating.
2. Practices appropriate use of social media in personal and professional environments.
3. Uses proper word choice and tone when communicating to superiors, customers/clients and co-workers.

E. Customer Service

1. Establishes positive relationship with internal/external customers.
2. Identifies and addresses customer's needs and wants.
3. Recommends appropriate products and services.
4. Uses effective follow-up techniques to assure that the needs of the customer have been met.



The career ready individual...

3. Contributes to employer and community success

Career ready means more than attending to self-interest. It also means the ability to see the bigger picture of playing a role in the success of the employer and community through personal, civic and community actions.

A. Personal Responsibility

1. Takes responsibility for individual and shared group work tasks.
2. Models behaviors that demonstrate reliability, dependability and commitment to the organization.
3. Pursues results with personal energy and drive to completion.

B. Meets Workplace Expectations

1. Arrives on time to work, appointments or meetings adequately prepared and appropriately dressed.
2. Complies with workplace policies, norms/culture, procedures and protocols.
3. Exhibits professional etiquette in all interactions.
4. Understands the importance of health, safety, human resource, and environmental regulations.

C. Civic Responsibility and Service

1. Participates in leadership and teamwork opportunities available through professional organizations and community groups/boards/committees.
2. Engages in local government through attendance, participation and service.
3. Demonstrates a respect for laws and regulations and those who enforce them.



Nebraska Career Education

The career ready individual...

4. Makes sense of problems and perseveres in solving them



A. Perceptiveness

1. Accurately defines a problem or issue.
2. Recognizes factors, constraints, goals and relationships in a problem situation.
3. Identifies irregularities in processes and environments and seeks to understand their cause.

B. Problem Solving

1. Presents multiple solutions to the problem based on evidence and insights.
2. Evaluates solutions and determines the potential value toward solving the problem.
3. Employs critical thinking skills independently and in teams to solve problems and make decisions.

C. Perseverance/Work Ethic

1. Establishes and executes plans to completion even when faced with setbacks.
2. Requires minimal supervision to successfully complete tasks on schedule.
3. Prioritizes tasks to ensure progress toward stated objectives.

Recognizing and solving problems is a daily requirement of nearly every American worker and entrepreneur. From small technical issues, to group dynamics, to design of overall systems, opportunities abound for the career ready individual to solve problems in the workplace.



The career ready individual...

5. Uses critical thinking

Nearly all careers now require interaction with complex systems of technical components, complex dynamics of people or both. Many decisions are not simple and straightforward; rather, they require the ability to intelligently reason through and make complex decisions.

A. Critical Thinking

1. Demonstrates the ability to reason critically and systematically.
2. Uses reason and logic to evaluate situations from multiple perspectives.
3. Critiques possible solutions using valid research, historical context and balanced judgment.
4. Recognizes and makes use of systems and relationships including interdependent cause-and-effect analysis and feedback.

B. Decision Making

1. Conducts research, gathers input and analyzes information necessary for decision-making.
2. Develops and prioritizes possible solutions with supporting rationale.
3. Determines a course of action with the greatest perceived potential for success while considering its impact on the human resources (workforce) of the organization.

C. Adaptability

1. Demonstrates a willingness to learn new knowledge and skills.
2. Considers multiple and diverse points of view.
3. Manages multiple tasks and priorities.
4. Exhibits the ability to focus, prioritize, organize and handle ambiguity.



Nebraska Career Education

The career ready individual...

6. Demonstrates innovation and creativity



A. Creativity

1. Uses information, knowledge and experience to generate original ideas and challenge assumptions.
2. Initiates brainstorming to generate ideas to solve problems or maximize opportunities.
3. Appreciates new and creative ideas of others.
4. Knows when to curb the creative process and begin implementation.

B. Innovation

1. Searches for new ways to improve the efficiency of existing processes.
2. Determines the feasibility of improvements for ideas and concepts.
3. Accepts and incorporates constructive criticism into proposals for innovation.
4. Takes informed risks to introduce innovation while understanding the limits of authority.

The 21st century workplace requires innovation through creative thinking. Successful individuals will be expected to generate and share new ideas.



The career ready individual...

7. Models ethical leadership and effective management

The ability to influence others relies on leadership. Today's workplace provides greater transparency and accountability where the ability to ethically lead and manage is essential.

A. Leadership

1. Employs organizational development skills to foster positive working relationships and accomplish goals.
2. Enlists the support of others to accomplish a goal.
3. Models the positive attributes of effective leaders (e.g. self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills).

B. Ethics

1. Considers the ethical implications of decisions and actions and their impact on personal reputation and credibility.
2. Recognizes personal and long-term workplace consequences of unethical or illegal behaviors.
3. Practices ethical behavior at all times and complies with organizational code of conduct.

C. Management

1. Differentiates between leadership and management.
2. Determines the objectives, parameters and deadlines involved in managing a project prior to beginning work.
3. Develops personal management skills to function effectively and efficiently.



Nebraska Career Education

The career ready individual...

8. Works productively in teams and demonstrates cultural competency



A. Teamwork

1. Builds consensus within a team to accomplish results.
2. Contributes to team-oriented projects and assignments.
3. Engages team members and utilizes individual talents and skills.

B. Conflict Resolution

1. Anticipates potential sources of conflict and employs conflict resolution skills to facilitate solutions.
2. Disagrees with a team member without causing personal offense.
3. Negotiates with conflicting parties to agree on a reasonable and mutually acceptable solution.

C. Social and Cultural Competence

1. Gives and earns respect by interacting positively with people of different backgrounds, experiences and beliefs.
2. Stays aware of current local, national and global news and issues.
3. Uses awareness of world cultures and languages to effectively communicate with co-workers and customers/clients.

Teams of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds have become the new norm of operation in the American workplace. The career ready individual is prepared to collaborate with colleagues representing various backgrounds.



The career ready individual...

9. Utilizes technology

The career ready individual has an understanding of how to use technology and apply it successfully in the workplace. Advances in technology require individuals to quickly learn and use many tools and applications.

A. Data Gathering, Access and Management

1. Uses various methods to search for valid, relevant data to complete workplace tasks.
2. Evaluates Internet resources for reliability and validity.
3. Develops and uses a consistent approach for managing data.

B. Tools and Applications

1. Uses the appropriate technology tools for conveying information, solving problems and expediting workplace processes.
2. Demonstrates the technology skills needed for a chosen career field.
3. Identifies the workplace value of technology tools and applications.

C. Technology Ethics

1. Understands the ethical uses of information and technology related to privacy, intellectual property and workplace issues.
2. Uses computer and Internet protocols that ensure cyber security and confidentiality of private information.
3. Abides by organizational policies on the acceptable use of workplace technology.



Nebraska Career Education

The career ready individual...

10. Manages personal career development



A. Planning

1. Identifies opportunities in one or more career pathways that aligns with personal interests and aptitudes.
2. Develops career goals and objectives.
3. Develops a personal education and career plan to meet goals and objectives.

B. Job Seeking

1. Uses multiple resources, including personal and professional networks, to locate job opportunities.
2. Researches information about a prospective employer to successfully complete an application.
3. Uses professional digital media to create a personal brand.
4. Markets self effectively to potential employers.

C. Résumés, Portfolios and Interviews

1. Prepares a professional résumé appropriate for each situation.
2. Produces a record of education and work experiences, licenses, certifications and projects/products to include in a portfolio.
3. Presents a professional image appropriate for the job interview.
4. Communicates experiences, knowledge and skills identified in the résumé and portfolio when interviewing.

Managing a personal career includes exploration, preparation and participation. Each person is responsible for creating and maintaining their own career. Career management includes understanding and meeting the expectations for behavior and skills in the workplace.



The career ready individual...

10. Manages personal career development

continued...

D. Professional Development

1. Identifies opportunities for career advancement.
2. Uses resources to develop goals that address training, education and self-improvement issues.
3. Maintains licensure, certification and credentialing requirements.

E. Entrepreneurship

1. Understands the knowledge and skills required of an entrepreneur.
2. Describes the opportunities for entrepreneurship in a given industry.
3. Weighs the opportunities, benefits, and risks of entrepreneurship versus employment in a career.



Nebraska Career Education

The career ready individual...

11. Attends to personal and financial well-being



A. Personal Well-being

1. Recognizes the value of a wide range of knowledge and experiences from the arts, culture and humanities to promote intellectual curiosity.
2. Follows a personal wellness plan that includes healthy eating, exercise and disease prevention.
3. Builds positive social relationships with supportive friends and family in a community.

B. Financial Well-being

1. Analyzes choices available to consumers for saving and investing.
2. Develops a personal budget that aligns to near-term and long-term priorities.
3. Establishes a good credit history by using credit responsibly.
4. Understands principles of insurance and identifies appropriate coverage.
5. Makes wise consumer purchasing decisions and avoids fraudulent financial practices.
6. Files and pays local, state and federal taxes in a correct and timely manner.

The career ready individual recognizes the benefits of physical, mental, social and financial well-being to be successful in a career.



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