Nebraska Department of
EDUCATION

NEBRASKA SUMMIT ON CAREER READINESS

SUMMARY & SYNTHESIS REPORT

November 3-4, 2009
Lincoln, NE

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Overview

Every aspect of our world is changing rapidly – the global political situation, the economy, social values, technology are all much different today than they were ten or twenty years ago.

As the world changes, education must also change, in order to insure that students are fully prepared for the world in which they're going to be living and working tomorrow and far into the future. Employers, however, have found that many critical skills and capabilities that are essential to success in the work force today have not been included in the curriculum.

To address this important issue, the Nebraska Department of Education convened the Nebraska Summit on Career Readiness on November 3 and 4, 2009 in Lincoln, to develop a detailed definition of "career readiness," and examine what specifically would be required to compose a comprehensive curriculum to support the learning needs of our youth.

The 75 participants in the Summit included a broad range of Nebraska leaders from major employers, educators from secondary and post-secondary institutions, individuals from the Departments of Labor and Education, and well as representatives of non-profit organizations and members of the Nebraska State Board of Education. They worked together in an active process of exploration, design, creativity, and dialog to work through a set of complex issues to arrive at a series of definitions, proposals, and recommendations.

This Report is a summary of the key findings of the Summit.

For additional detail, you may visit the Summit web site at:
http://www.ne-career-readiness.com/index.html

Please note that this web site is provided primarily for the Summit participants, and the contents of the web site may not be entirely clear to anyone who did not attend the Summit.

Definition of Career Readiness

The Summit participants developed this definition for Career Readiness:

A Career Ready person is one
who capitalizes on their personal strengths,
talents,
education, and
experiences
to bring value to the workplace
and the community
through their performance,
diligence,
ethics, and
responsible behavior.

Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors

The Summit participants developed the following list of eleven essential areas of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that a career ready graduate should have.

- Inter- and Intra-Personal Skills
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Work Ethic and Personal Responsibility
- Core Knowledge and Core Standards
- Communication Skills
- Technology
- Adaptability and Life Long Learning
- Exposure to the Work Environment
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Global and Social Awareness

They then went on to define the attributes of each area in considerable detail (presented below). In each area, participants brainstormed a detailed list of attributes, and then identified the five items on the list that they felt were the most critical.

Shifts

This activity focused on identifying specific shifts that need to take place by 2015 in various organizations, processes, and stakeholder groups to support the shift to the career readiness model. Working in teams, the participants addressed the following questions:

> **By 2015, what roles will selected groups play in the system through which all Nebraskans become career ready?**
>
> **What specific changes in each group are needed in order for all Nebraskans to be career ready?**

The groups examined included: business, high schools, post-secondary education, state government, professional development, teaching colleges, the Nebraska Department of Labor, and the Nebraska Department of Education.

Each team produced a "shift paper" that showed key changes taking place from the "current way (2009)" to the "new way (2015)," and indicated specifically what policies, processes, structures, programs, etc. would enable change to happen.

Shifts in Business

In the future business will pay for the time necessary to mentor students. Businesses will reach out and come into the classroom, and will also open their doors to mentor teachers in the business world.

Businesses will have teachers and students onsite for workplace-based learning, and we would like businesses to give a preference for Nebraska-raised employees in hiring. This might be driven by a tax credit.

Student project teams for business projects will be enabled by grants or tax credits. Businesses should offer incentives to students or schools to pursue innovative projects in their industries. Business can offer incentives to push further innovation in career education.

Nine Key Shifts for Business from 2009 to 2015

Shifts 1 and 2 were identified by the Summit participants as the overall top priorities.

	From - 2009	Enabler of the Shift	To - 2015
1	Minimal	Accept liability / innovation in learning opportunities	Workplace-based learning
2	Common @ post-secondary	$ / tax credits or incentive program / influence legislation / business innovation	Student project teams for business projects
3	Sporadic	Opening the doors	Mentoring of teachers
4	Minimal	Incentives to schools / graduates	Push innovation in career education
5	Sporadic	Business reaching out; paid time	Business in the classroom
6	None	Tax credit / incentives / influence legislation	Preference for NE graduates
7	National validation	Identify competencies / communicate to schools	Input into curriculum
8	Minimal	Incentives for applicable student projects	Lead innovation in schools
9	Sporadic	Paid time to mentor / ID benefits to business	Mentoring of students

Shifts in High Schools

High schools should shift the traditional 9-month school year to year-round schooling, with a multiple-shift model. Political will is needed to change this policy - everyone needs to buy into it in order for this large a change to happen.

We will also shift from a seat-time/240-credit model to an interactive, application-based learning-experience model. This requires a big change in teacher understanding, and will allow the "classroom" to expand from the four walls of the school building into the entire community.

We will shift from the "sit & get"/teacher-as-gatekeeper model to a more state of the art approach to instruction and learning. This will require buy-in from all stakeholders and a lot of professional development.

We will shift from a resource-allocation model to an investment mindset. How can we generate the greatest impact for our children with the dollars we spend? We need to involve business and industry and the entire community.

Shifts in High Schools (Continued)

Six Key Shifts for High Schools from 2009 to 2015

Shift 1 was identified by the Summit participants as the overall top priority.

	From - 2009	Enablers of the Shift	To - 2015
1	4 walls / seat time / 240 credits	• Political will • Agreed upon policy shift • Increased student performance • Teacher understanding	Interactive, application-based, student-selected learning experiences; Classroom not limited to 4 walls
2	Resource allocation	• Partner with business + industry • Political will • Policy shift • Increased student performance	Involve business+ industry to maximize resources of time, $, peopleto support relevance and create balanced integration of core and career tech ed
3	Teacher as gatekeeper	• Professional development • Teacher prep	• Teacher as coach, facilitator, organizer • Student demonstration of skills • Relevant career experiences
4	Standard 7 hour day / 5 day week	• Political will • Agreed upon policy shift • Increased student performance	Multiple, flexible shifts of the day / week
5	9 months school year	• Political will • Agreed upon policy shift • Increased student performance	Year round school
6	Sit & get	Personal Learning Plan	State of the art approaches

Shifts in Post-Secondary Education

We will shift away from a remediation model through better preparation. We will eliminate some of the social obstacles for students by leveraging community resources better. We will integrate applied learning and textbook knowledge.

We will also improve the career and college advising system. We think that learning communities and mentors will improve our retention rates.

There should be a statewide agreement for all courses to improve the transferability of credits.

Smaller class sizes and learning seminars will improve the retention rates.

An employability skills class will improve the soft skills to help students get the jobs they want.

Ten Key Shifts for Post Secondary Education from 2009 to 2015

Shifts 1 and 2 were identified by the Summit participants as the overall top priorities. Shift 10 was considered entirely implausible.

	From - 2009	Enabler of the Shift	To - 2015
1	Traditional Credit Prereqs	Internships / Job Shadow	Skill based experience + text book knowledge
2	Lack of consistency w dual credit	Statewide agreement for all courses	Transferability of DE credits state wide
3	Poor advising system	Full time advisor	Clear direction / reduced completion time
4	Large impersonal lectures,	Smaller class sizes;	All students learning;
	freshman survival	personal interactions	teachers accountable for teaching
5	Lack of cooperation between	Legislative change;	Retooling without starting over
	post-secondary schools	collaboration incentives	
6	Poor retention rates	Learning communities / mentors	Improved retention rates / more degree completers
7	Remediation	Better preparation	Seamless transition
8	Social Issues	Resources / support	Empowered students
9	Lack of business etiquette	Employability skills class	Improved soft skills / "got the job"
10	Tuition increasing	Schools control costs	Tuition decreasing

Shifts in Government Policy

We will encourage legislation to improve the transferability of credits between higher education in the state.

We need to change the policies that focus on "seat time" to focus on performance-based benchmarks.

We want to expand the eligibility for financial aid to students who are not seeking degrees.

We want to improve community and family supports to reduce the minority achievement gaps.

We need to invest in teacher development to improve our global achievement gaps.

We need to improve our STEM participation through incentive programs.

We need to develop alternative delivery models to help students and adults acquire the 21st century skills that they need.

Shifts in Government Policy (Continued)

Seven Key Shifts for Government Policy from 2009 to 2015

Shifts 1 and 2 were identified by the Summit participants as the overall top priorities.

	From - 2009	Enabler of the Shift	To - 2015
1	Requirements related to "seat time" rather than performance	Carnegie units rules to be performance based	Performance based benchmarks
2	Lack of flexibility in transferability of college credit	Collaboration by higher ed / legislation	Credit universally transferred
3	Global achievement gap	• Centers for excellence • Language learning • Teacher prep	Invest in teacher prep & resources
4	Minority achievement gaps	• Family & community support • Minority mentorship & recruitment • Learning style & curriculum customization	Incentive funds for local solutions
5	Unemployed / adv workers needing 21st century skills	• Alternative delivery models • Social & family support • Adult career pathways	Investments in career pathways leveraging other stakeholder $
6	STEM participation	Incentives, exposure, awareness	Incentive investment, collaborate with business
7	Limitation in access to financial aid	Open up financial aid eligibility to non-degree seekers	Expand eligibility for state financial aid

Shifts in Professional Development

We will individualize professional development through technology, subgroups, and partnerships, and we should integrate career readiness across the academic curriculum as well as the other way around.

We need to expand our professional development to include partnerships, externships, advisory boards and shared training with business, the community and other stakeholders.

We would like to develop a professional career plan for teachers (like students have a PLP). This should be supported by post-secondary organizations and business, and this should be made much easier for teachers to pursue.

We need to develop statewide career readiness standards by changing perspectives at schools and rolling out a statewide delivery model.

Five Key Shifts for Professional Development from 2009 to 2015

Shifts 1, 2, and 3 were identified by the Summit participants as the overall top priorities.

	From - 2009	Enabler of the Shift	To - 2015
1	CTE integrates academics	• Increased communication / PLC • Switch focus to career path • Statewide CR standards	CTE <> academics
2	• Not in place • Statewide standards for CR	• Changing school perspective • Utilize current standard development procedures • Statewide delivery	Statewide career readiness standards
3	Within 4 walls built by educators	• Externships • Advisory boards • Shared planning / training	Stakeholder partnerships - business, community, post-secondary
4	• Varies by school and/or district • Continue prof. Credits	• Career advancement / reward • Technology • Support by post-secondary and/or business	Professional career plan
5	Large Group / One Group	• Technology • ESU • Sub-group / PLC • Partnership • Train the trainer	Individualized

Shifts in Teaching Colleges

For change to take place in teacher colleges, pressure needs to come from outside organizations like the Department of Labor.

Teacher educators need to get more experience outside the academic walls, and more experience in the K-12 world. Teachers need to be more aware of the needs of business and industry, as that is the destination for their students.

Teacher education must change in response to competency-based models for K-12 education, and teachers need to adjust their approaches to changes in students, needs and technology.

Six Key Shifts for Teaching Colleges from 2009 to 2015

Shifts 1 and 2 were identified by the Summit participants as the overall top priorities.

	From - 2009	Enabler of the Shift	To - 2015
1	Teacher educators need more K-12 experience	State coordinator mentors exchange programs to keep teaching profession up to date	Bring K-12 ed into teacher ed programs as adjuncts and provideK-12 experiences and all should have non-education employment experience
2	Teachers need to adjust and change with needs of students	Following and adapting new research and best practices	Prepare to adjust with emerging technology, learning strategies, cross-curricular strategies
3	Teacher Ed programs prepare for public school employment	Provide teachers experience in employment in the field	Prepare teachers to be the end-user of business/industry
4	As K-12 schools become competency based, what happens to teacher education?	Student data driven and student experience driven	Teacher education needs to implement performance indicators and competences
5	Model instruction to the student of 2015		PD for teacher ed, utilize business/industry brain-based research
6	No outside pressure from outside organizations to create change in teacher colleges	Opportunity for stakeholder to recognize their power and influence on teacher ed programs	Neb chamber, Econ dev, DOL, supts all pressure teacher ed program to change

Shifts in Nebraska Department of Labor

Many existing Department of Labor programs could be changed to have a greater impact by 2015. This will require dealing with policy alignment, strategic planning, state and federal legislation.

We will spread a lot of these ideas throughout our partnerships outside of our agency. We can streamline and simplify ourselves; a lot of the change will also involve deep collaborations with partners.

We also explored the idea that career education could exist throughout the P-16 continuum.

Nine Key Shifts for the Nebraska Department of Labor from 2009 to 2015

Shifts 1 - 9 were identified by the Summit participants as the overall top priorities.

	From - 2009	Enabler of the Shift	To - 2015
1	P-16	• Mindset shift • Policy / legislation	• Career education is a p_16 and adult system • Assure that there is integration of core and career education • Grow and expand the centers and programs • Enlist business community to assure real life experiences • Community based & community colleges
2	Career education programs (9 - 16)	Alignment of programs	
3	Employment services	Strategic planning	
4	Entrepreneur centers / programs	• Marketing • Alignment of resources	Business incubation
5	Career counseling	Professional development	
6	Academics - career	Marketing / awareness	Enhanced number of academics based on needs
7	WIA - adult dislocated worker - youth	Legislation	Expand the opportunities
8	Economic development grants - incentives	Alignment, legislation	Simplification and streamlining programs
9	Collaboration with all workforce development projects	Alignment, legislation	Streamline; examine; periodic study

Shifts in Nebraska Department of Education

We will shift from seat-time to performance-based education, and from credit-hours to skills. We also will align our assessments state wide. We need to develop task forces to do thorough research into how to implement all of these big changes that we're talking about.

We need to educate not only legislators, but also much larger communities throughout the state about what career readiness is all about.

We need to balance statewide professional development models with local and individual choices. We need to live the P-16 articulation, and this will require education and collaboration.

We need to communicate how all of the different pieces of the education program fit together. We should also put all of the great research that the DOE does on the website to make it available to school districts. This will all require a lot of resources.

Twelve Key Shifts for the Nebraska Department of Education from 2009 to 2015

Shifts 1, 2, and 3 were identified by the Summit participants as the overall top priorities.

	From - 2009	Enabler of the Shift	To - 2015
1	Seat time	Task force	Performance / skill based
2	Credits / hours	Task force	Skills
3	Graduation requirement	Task force	College and career ready
4	Core curriculum requirements	Statewide professional development	Help schools transition to new model
5	Talking about p_16	Educate, plan, collaborate, implement	Living p_16 articulation
6	Educating educators about standards	Spokesperson	Educate communities
7	Variety of tests	P-16 Task force	Align assessments
8	NDE department operatives	Internal coordination	Consistency across departments
9	Professional development needed	P-16 Task force	Strengthen & financial support
10	Research	Website distribute	Provide it for us
11	Technology	Policy > expectation	True integration into teaching & learning; Minimum proficiencies
12	Teacher accreditation	Task force	Redesign

Conclusion

On behalf of the Nebraska Department of Education, we would like to thank all participants for their dedication and hard work throughout the workshop.

We have prepared a strong foundation for continued improvement to the educational process here in Nebraska. While we have a lot of work still ahead of us, we are pleased with the results we accomplished during these two dynamic days.

We look forward to working with you all as we continue to progress in these important activities.

As noted, the complete documentation of the summit can be viewed online at
http://www.ne-career-readiness.com/index.html

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