

It's time  
to get ready  
for work.



The Role of  
**Career Education**

in Developing  
**Career Ready  
Graduates**



# How are Nebraska schools going to achieve



Career education courses provide hands-on learning experiences and problem solving strategies that are valuable to every student regardless of career path or college plans.

By incorporating Career Readiness into appropriate curriculum and programs as they are developed, implemented and evaluated.

By integrating core academic courses and career education programs to bring even greater relevance and value to every student's school experience.

By providing opportunities for students to become aware of career choices throughout their education—as early as elementary school.

By helping students understand the relationship between today's educational choices and tomorrow's career potential.



Core academic courses provide the fundamentals that are critical to Career Readiness. When integrated with career education courses, academic classes become even more relevant to a student's future success in career or college.

## Career Readiness for every student?

By developing Personalized Learning Plans for each student to help them match their educational plans, interests and talents with careers that offer the greatest promise for success.

By linking the student, the classroom and the counselor's office to facilitate student success in high school, college and the workplace.

By engaging students in ways that build their confidence, encourage personal responsibility and develop behaviors that are critical to success in their personal and professional lives.

By creating opportunities for parents and their children to explore career possibilities together.

By providing students who have the entrepreneurial spirit with the skills, encouragement and inspiration needed to start their own business.

By establishing even stronger relationships with business and industry to ensure that students are acquiring the skills needed for the Nebraska jobs of today and tomorrow.

All these initiatives are driven by one powerful, game-changing, life-changing concept in Nebraska schools: **Career Readiness.**

# Career Readiness

# Career Readiness

Career Readiness is about the next step in life.



Career exploration tools such as [NebraskaCareerConnections.org](http://NebraskaCareerConnections.org) can help students discover career options they didn't know they had—and the educational path that leads to success.

When students are Career Ready, they are prepared for the next step in their lives—whether that means getting their first job or beginning their college “career” (which eventually leads to the workplace as well!)

Every Nebraska student, regardless of background, interests or intent after graduating from high school, can and should be Career Ready. Because being Career Ready also means being ready for life.

**Career Readiness is about the basics.** A strong academic foundation—and personal ethics. Speaking and writing effectively. Analyzing situations and solving problems. Understanding fundamental concepts in math and science. Being where you're expected to be—when you're expected to be there. Meeting deadlines. Conducting yourself professionally.

Career education courses help students discover their talents and may provide the entrepreneurial spark for them to start a business in their community.



## And the many steps after that.

### **Career Readiness is about knowing your stuff.**

Understanding available technology and how and when to use it appropriately. Using what you know to address new challenges and new opportunities. Knowing what you don't know—and being enthusiastic about learning more and getting even better. Having the knowledge, drive and confidence to start your own business.

### **Career Readiness is about relationships.**

Collaborating with co-workers. Respecting the opinions, privacy and cultures of others. Working well on your own and as a member of a team. Accepting responsibility and understanding the consequences of your decisions. Making healthy choices. Understanding your role in the bigger picture of your community, state, nation and world.

**Career Readiness is about generating a powerful, homegrown workforce across Nebraska.** Creating a steady supply of responsible leaders and skilled employees in a wide range of industries—in all 93 counties. Inspiring young entrepreneurs and young professionals to start businesses in their hometowns. Career Readiness means a more vibrant economy, a sustainable business environment—and greater opportunity, growth and revenue for Nebraska at every level.

# Career Education

in Nebraska schools—

## IT'S TIME TO GET READY

### **Career education programs in Nebraska schools are a critical component in helping Nebraska students become Career Ready.**

The time spent in career education courses provides a number of opportunities for hands-on learning, collaboration and teamwork, and confidence building.



Career education courses encourage collaboration, teamwork and networking—all important aspects of Career Readiness.

When career education courses are integrated with core academic courses such as math, science, English/language arts and social studies, the result is a well-rounded student

who has the confidence, skills and education needed to adapt to a changing world, to continue to develop and learn, and to contribute value to their community for decades.

While career education programs vary by school district, the full range of career education courses include:

- ▶ business, marketing and management
- ▶ agriculture, food and environment
- ▶ industry, manufacturing and engineering
- ▶ human services and education
- ▶ health sciences
- ▶ communication and information systems

These are areas where good jobs exist—Nebraska jobs. Regardless of whether a high school student intends to enter the workforce upon graduation—or enroll in college—the experience gained in career education courses prepares them for success.

### **How career education courses support Career Readiness:**

Taking career education courses in high school helps students learn about career areas they

# FOR WORK.

never knew existed—and may be a great match for them to make a living.

Career education helps students develop the work ethic, responsible behaviors, leadership skills and self-discipline that are fundamental to success in every walk of life.

Career education engages students through hands-on experiences, work-related opportunities, community projects and team-based activities.

The career student organizations associated with career education (see sidebar) give students real-life opportunities to develop their talents, practice what they have learned and get involved in statewide initiatives.

Career education helps college-bound students get a better handle on what they might like to study in college—and can ease the transition between high school and the college environment.



## Career Student Organizations offer opportunities for involvement, leadership and career exploration.

Many career education programs have affiliated student organizations that provide valuable experiences for statewide networking, career awareness, leadership opportunities and team projects—great resumé builders for both college and career. Career student organizations include:

**FFA:** Focused on agricultural education, skill development and leadership opportunities. [www.ffa.neaged.org](http://www.ffa.neaged.org)

**DECA:** Prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management. [www.nedeca.org](http://www.nedeca.org)

**FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America):** Provides innovative leadership and career development programs for students interested in business, management, finance and information technology careers. [www.nebraskafbla.org](http://www.nebraskafbla.org)

**FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America):** Focused on the multiple roles of the family member, wage earner and community leader. [www.nebraskafccla.org](http://www.nebraskafccla.org)

**HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America):** Promotes career opportunities in health care and enhances the delivery of quality health care to all people. [www.education.ne.gov/healthscience/index.htm](http://www.education.ne.gov/healthscience/index.htm)

**SkillsUSA:** Serving students enrolled in programs preparing them for technical, skilled and service careers. [www.skillsusanebraska.org](http://www.skillsusanebraska.org)

**FEA (Future Educators Association):** Dedicated to supporting young people interested in education-related careers at all levels. [www.futureeducators.org](http://www.futureeducators.org)

Check with your school to learn which organizations are available. 7

# Career Readiness & Career Education

make a difference for Nebraska students,

## If you're a student...

### **Why Career Readiness matters to you:**

Regardless of your plans after graduating from high school—getting a job, going to college, entering the military—Career Readiness means you'll be better prepared for what comes next. Who knows what new opportunities will appear during your lifetime? When you're Career Ready, you'll be able to adapt to change, take a new career path that suits you or maybe even start your own business.

**How career education courses help:** These courses can give you the skills and confidence you need to make your mark in the world—even become a business owner yourself. You'll get hands-on experiences and real-life opportunities to help you discover what you're really good at—and what it will take to turn your interests and talents into a productive and rewarding career. If you plan to enter the workforce after

high school, career education courses will help you rise to the top during an interview. If you plan to go to college, career education courses will help make that transition between high school and college a bit easier.

**What you can do:** Talk with your school counselor or a career education teacher. Visit [NebraskaCareerConnections.org](http://NebraskaCareerConnections.org) with your parents to explore careers that might interest you—and the educational path you need to take. Get involved in a career student organization—and if you're ready to take on leadership, this is the place to do it. Talk with a fellow student who is in a career education program.

parents and businesses.



Career education courses provide opportunities for students to develop technical skills, work ethic and self-confidence that serve them well when they enter the workforce or college.

# Career Readiness & Career Education

## If you're a parent...



Working with your child to learn more about career options can bring greater focus to schoolwork and eventually lead to Career Readiness.

**Why Career Readiness matters to you:** Career Readiness is about preparing children for success regardless of where life may take them. It's the complete package—from academic education to work-related skills. From personal responsibility to effective communication. From healthy behaviors to healthy relationships. It starts in elementary school, when your child begins to learn about the hundreds of careers that exist. In middle school, career exploration can start to identify options that match your child's talents and interests. In high school, specific courses and experiences can better define your child's path and lead to informed choices about the next steps after graduation.

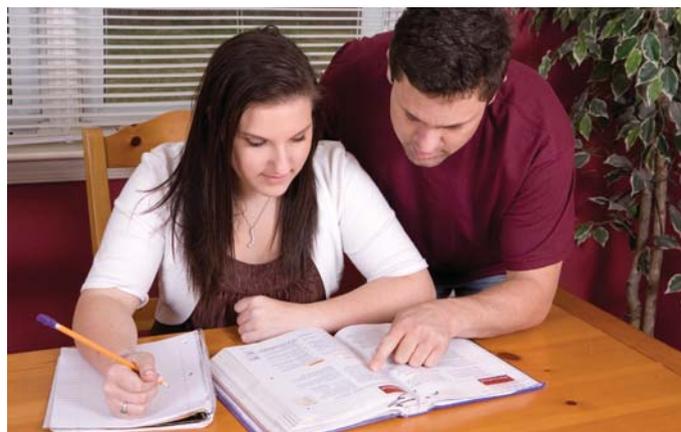
**How career education courses help:** If your child intends to enter the job market upon graduation from high school, career education courses provide an edge in a competitive

marketplace—and develop the work and personal skills needed to succeed in the career of his/her choice. Career education courses provide hands-on learning experiences and skill development that are important to potential employers.

If your child is college-bound, career education courses can help instill the self-discipline and focus needed to make a successful transition to the college environment. Career education can also help your college-bound child choose the right major early on—and that can avoid wasted time and frustration and save money on tuition in the long haul.

**What you can do:** Talk to your child about what types of careers he or she would like to explore by visiting [NebraskaCareerConnections.org](http://NebraskaCareerConnections.org) with them—and discuss the educational path that leads to that destination. Learn more

If your child is college bound, career education courses can ease the transition between high school and college.



about the career student organizations in your school. Talk with teachers and counselors about how your child can get transferable college credit while still in high school. Start early with teachers and counselors—and get involved in the development of a Personal Learning Plan for your child.

# Career Readiness & Career Education

## If you're a business owner or employer...

**Why Career Readiness matters to you:** When you hire graduates who are Career Ready, you improve the odds of those employees becoming valuable contributors to the success of your organization. Career Ready employees help

you reduce turnover and training costs. Career Readiness in Nebraska schools is focused on producing a sustainable workforce for your business today—and in the future.

**How career education courses help:** Career education courses instill the work ethic, skill development and responsible behavior you want in your employees. Hands-on experience, collaboration and problem solving are fundamental to career education courses. Students who have been involved in career education and the career student organizations in high school have learned what it takes to meet expectations, get a job done and work in a team environment or leadership role.



Career education programs prepare graduates to accept responsibility and work collaboratively in a business environment.

**What you can do:** Share information and best work practices with the career education teachers in your local schools about where your industry is heading so they can adapt their curriculum as needed. Discover how you can provide work and learning experiences for high school students in your facilities or at the school. Visit your local school to learn more about career education programs that are focused on developing your future employees. Establish a business profile on [NebraskaCareerConnections.org](http://NebraskaCareerConnections.org) to provide students with a way to learn more about your business and what it takes to work for you.



Providing work experiences for students is one way that business and industry can help Nebraska schools develop Career Ready graduates.

# Career Readiness & Career Education

## What Nebraska schools are doing to develop



Career education courses help college-bound students make an easier transition between high school and college.

**Career Readiness** for every Nebraska student is the objective and the goal. We're already doing what is necessary to make it a reality.

The definition of a Career Ready individual has been formally adopted and approved by the Nebraska Board of Education.

Career Readiness standards for Nebraska schools have been developed and are being used as a guideline for curriculum development.

Career education teachers and core academic teachers (math, science, English/language arts and social studies) are working together on ways to integrate Career Readiness experiences into their classrooms throughout the school.



Career awareness can start as early as elementary school as students gain basic knowledge of the wide range of careers that exist.

## Career Ready students.

School systems are working with business and industry to discuss changes in the workplace and the skills needed to ensure the employability of high school and college graduates. Some are even looking at how to change their education system to accomplish this.

Career awareness and exploration initiatives are being expanded and enhanced to provide students and parents with more resources at every level of education.

Nebraska colleges are working with high schools and each other to increase opportunities for students to earn college credit before they graduate from high school.



**Career Readiness** is about improving the value, impact and relevance of students' education—from elementary through high school.

**Career Readiness** is about improving the prospects for all students' success in college and the workplace.

**Career Readiness** is about a shared vision and purpose for all professionals in a school system.

**Career Readiness** is about strengthening the role of Nebraska schools in economic development throughout the state.

**Career Readiness** is about providing a foundation to build strong individuals, families and communities across Nebraska.

For more information on Career Readiness and the career education programs in your school district, visit with your local school or contact:

**Nebraska Career Education**

301 Centennial Mall South

P.O. Box 94987

Lincoln, NE 68509

[www.education.ne.gov/nce](http://www.education.ne.gov/nce)



**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.

This simple sentence will change  
the face of Nebraska education.  
And, as a result, the future of our entire state.

Wouldn't it be something if every student graduating from a Nebraska high school fit this description? If every graduate was "Career Ready?"

If every high school graduate brought these attributes to the next stage of his or her life—either in the workplace or on a college campus?

Imagine the effect on Nebraska communities, Nebraska businesses, Nebraska's economy. Imagine the effect on Nebraska's future.

Ensuring that every student who graduates from a Nebraska high school is Career Ready is not a simple task. And it won't happen overnight.

**Career Readiness** is our objective. And Nebraska's schools are determined to achieve it.

---

Here's how:

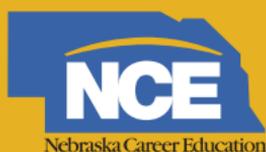
# Career Education

An important component  
in Career Readiness.

Career education courses play an important role in Career Readiness by offering real-life work experiences, leadership opportunities and confidence building. When career education courses are integrated with core academic courses, school counseling, parental involvement and collaboration with business and industry, it's no longer simply about education.

It's also about sustainable economic development for every Nebraska community. Developing a skilled and talented workforce that is prepared to lead, collaborate and innovate in the industries and professions that matter to Nebraska's future. Improving the prospects of success as students transition from high school to college. Inspiring young entrepreneurs and professionals to start businesses in their hometowns. Creating involved citizens, strong families and economic vitality in every Nebraska county.

**Career Readiness is purpose-driven education—**  
and career education courses are critical to achieving Career Readiness in every Nebraska student.



301 Centennial Mall South  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
[www.education.ne.gov/nce](http://www.education.ne.gov/nce)

It is the policy of the Nebraska Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, age, or national origin in its education programs, admission policies, employment, or other agency programs.

Funding was provided by the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 funds administered through the Nebraska Department of Education, grant number V048A090027.