Teacher Advisory Council
Education + Workforce
Connections Report

Cross-Industry Findings from Interviews with Influencers along the “Cradle through Career” Continuum
In early 2019, 52 individuals in a variety of roles were each asked 7 questions, shining a light on their expertise in...

- **P-12 education**
  - Teachers, peer coaches, counselors and administrators
  - 15 districts and charter schools in DE, HI, KY, NY, NC, IL, TN and WA

- **Institutes of higher education**
  - 5 universities
  - 2 community colleges

- **State and local government**
  - State education agencies in DE, KY and TN, including 1 current and 1 former state superintendent of ed
  - 1 mayor
  - 1 city councilperson
  - 1 city human resources manager

- **Nonprofit and philanthropy organizations**
  - Education association
  - Chamber of commerce
  - Workforce development
  - Student support
  - Foundation

**Businesses spanning several industries:**
- Manufacturing
- Legal services
- Retail
- Engineering
- Transportation
- Consulting
- Science
- Finance
19 TAC members from 5 Hope Street Group Teacher Fellows Programs and 10 different states conducted these 1:1 conversations.

Backing up qualitative data culled in a virtual forum – two Fall 2018 Twitter chats using the hashtag #HSGPrep – and posing the same questions, Hope Street Group’s (HSG) Teacher Advisory Council (TAC) was compelled to interview professionals influential to the career development of children and adults, regarding the relationships across P-12 education, post-secondary options such as traditional higher education degrees or trade training programs, government and the workforce.

These HSG alumni leaders, experienced in leading focus groups through their state and national Teacher Fellows programs, drew honest reflections from a diverse group of influencers. Questions posed, our most frequently cited themes in the data, and TAC-led recommendations are as follows. We invite you to join the discussion online using #HSGTAC.

www.hopestreetgroup.org/tfalumni/tac
The competencies valued most but often missing across all levels and sectors are:

- Problem-solving
- Perseverance through challenges, including failure
- Communication skills such as professional correspondence, persuasive writing and public speaking

Interviewees agreed that technical skills matter and youth training devoted to acquisition of such skills (in hands-on vocational environments, or community colleges) will undoubtedly better prepare graduates to enter the workforce and hit the ground running.

But it’s the general workplace collaboration, self-regulation and self-advocacy skills – not “soft” but essential or foundational skills – that ranked highest among employers and educators, both.

Spotlights

"[I value one’s ability to] speak publically in front of clients, to be articulate and able to communicate succinctly and with authority. Also written business communication, appropriate in an office. And interpersonal skills."

– Jane Caradale, Founder and Principal, CastleBridge Consulting (Tampa, FL)

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“Tone is typically set by company leadership, but requires individual employees to have practical problem solving skills, a glass-full mentality, to establish company culture. Accordingly, we search for honest, problem solving people that are willing to challenge in a positive, forward-looking perspective.”

– Bryan Tracy, CEO of White Dog Labs (Wilmington, DE)
Dispositions cited by many respondents, which ensure success when combined with key competencies, are:

- **Positivity**
- **Openness, inclusivity and teamwork**
- **Proactivity and initiative**

Dispositions are aptitudes and inclinations that some might consider “skills,” but Hope Street Group has measured across its Teacher Fellows Network as oftentimes innate and attitudinal, therefore learnable and changeable.

Interviewees named prized dispositions such as **adaptability and patience, empathy, altruism/“servant-heartedness” and ownership for one’s own successes and failures**, both. Lifelong learning, an aspect of being proactive and initiating growth, was also named by diverse respondents. Being resourceful and taking initiative lends to solving problems, a key competency.

**Q2**

How do student and worker behaviors or dispositions influence success in your school or organization?

Name a disposition you value in your student or employee population and describe why it’s important.

**Spotlights**

“If we trade someone for a specific piece of technology, that’s obviously going to change within 3 to 5 years. Where does that leave students then? Students need to be adaptable and learn to learn and reinvent themselves. How do we teach them to be learners, not just compliant?”

– Jerre Maynor, Director of Student Readiness and Pathways, Tennessee Department of Education (Nashville, TN)

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“Without honesty, my employees cannot function. [Also important is] knowing when you’re incompetent and asking for help to complete your task.”

– Jerry Shafer, Owner, SKS Engineers (Decatur, IL)
Assess if perceived “skills gaps” are more so dispositional/attitudinal differences among workers or students and choose how to apply interventions accordingly.

Leaders need to model essential skills for their students and staff if they want to encourage them.

Generational and experiential factors need to be taken into account when “skills” are judged—are the expectations fair? Clear? Validated by diverse stakeholders in the org and not a single decision-maker who might possess (intentional or implicit) biases?

Technical skills gaps can actually be overcome through deliberate support to perform tasks, but foundational skills cut through all academic and work settings and should be fostered throughout, too.

Evaluate if your school or organization fosters a culture that encourages prized dispositions, and consider tweaks to your vetting, recruitment, onboarding, and/or assessment/evaluation accordingly.

Promote a culture of reflection for individuals to acknowledge personal responsibility for encouraging these dispositions in their teams, their peers, and the people they serve.

Be vulnerable up front about the problems you want people to solve so it allows for them to take initiative, exhibiting that disposition AND flexing the problem-solving competency you seek.
Interviewees mentioned that deliberate school and company program designs, such as the following, can positively impact student and worker success:

- Virtual learning and training programs
- Point people for cultivating P12-higher ed-business partnerships and data sharing
- Secondary school academy model
- Data-driven instruction based on labor statistics
- Dual degree programs offering early college credit
- Work-based learning experiences including extended internships

How are your school systems or organizations currently addressing workforce development challenges?

Who are the people or what are the tools that assist in this pursuit of building competency in your student or employee population?

Q3

Spotlights

“Our Academy Coach helped each of our 6 academies form advisory boards which incorporate community and business partners to work alongside of Academy Principal, Academy Leads and other school personnel. They have direct input on the skills and competencies that are developed in our students. As our curriculum evolves to incorporate more problem based learning, they will be critical in helping us embed industry standards alongside our academic standards.”

– Jon Henry Lee, Principal, Campbell High School (Ewa Beach, HI)

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Manual H.S. students earn early college credits via partnership with Community College of Denver (Denver, CO)
How do you utilize technology to contribute to the competency development and advancement of your students or employees?

Certain types of technological tools lending to preparation for the workforce, named by respondents, were:

- **Individual devices, i.e. tablets**
- **Web-based coursework and paced project-based learning**
- **Online collaboration tools**
  - Google Drive, Skype/Zoom, Screencastify, Blackboard, and Adobe Creative Suite
  - “Flipped” instruction puts students in the driver’s seat and prepares young people for workplace communication.
- **Data systems**
  - Student assessment tools
  - Labor market analysis to understand supply and demand
- **Strategic, educational use of social media for sharing resources with peers, workers or students, policymakers and the public**

**Spotlights**

“Technology can be a double-edged sword. As we continue to modernize and automate our processes, it has also eliminated some jobs. So we’re trying to identify 21st century jobs that will always require the human touch.”

– Derek Kawakami, Mayor of Kauai (Hawai‘i)

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“We use social media to help build relationships and community.”

– Joshua Hall, Director of Graduate Admissions, UNC Chapel Hill Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences (Chapel Hill, NC)

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Navigator portal for North Carolina ed-biz connections
Research innovations in education to challenge your assumptions about how teachers are preparing students.

Examine hybrid teaching roles and corporate roles with staff responsibilities related to strategic partnerships: programs that bring the workforce into education and vice versa.

Invest in practitioners – with training and collaboration time* – to consider career pathways, life readiness or career development in the context of their own work.

Focus on the how and not the what: be skeptical of the “best new thing” in ed tech or business, prioritizing the critical thinking that helps people use any tool for learning and doing.

Challenge yourselves and the people you serve to be producers and not just consumers of technology, innovating and adapting resources to needs.

Get creative with limited resources, but also recognize when inequitable resources hold back students and workers. Fight for them!

*Time within the workday (not extracurricular or voluntary, but mandated).
Describe what better alignment and coordination across P-12 education, higher education and the workforce would look like.

How could this improved alignment lead to economic opportunity that benefits workers, their families and whole communities?

- Systems and stakeholders consider students first, prioritizing equity and social-emotional factors.

- Students have hands-on opportunities with career pathways, via internships and apprenticeships.
  - This includes more preservice training in schools for aspiring educators.

- Business moves fast and education systems move slowly: we need more synchronicity in the pace of industry trends and school implementation.

- Exploratory committees joining education and industry leaders meet regularly to design P-12 curriculum according to highly sought workforce skills and dispositions.

- More transparent data systems provide students, parents and employers all access to information that informs their decision-making.

**Spotlights**

“A better aligned system would give students P-12 support, with advice about careers and flexible entry and exit points. The competencies should be based on the total student: social, mental and emotional, academic, and technical support and instruction. Community Colleges, 4-year colleges and universities, and P-12 systems need to work in a collaborative manner.”

— Dr. June Atkinson, former North Carolina State Superintendent of Schools

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“Shifts in the economy and demand for workers fluctuate far faster than workers can be trained and educated in specific areas.”

— Josh Bachmeier, HR Manager, City of Owensboro (Owensboro, KY)
How do (or should) policymakers and organizational leaders support solutions to local, state, regional, and/or national workforce development challenges?

- Elevate teachers and listen to their expertise before passing policies or reforms. Different than merely saving a seat at the table, or offering a “final review,” this is soliciting input early and often in processes that will result in changes to instruction, the dynamics of teaching and learning, and yes – educators’ own careers.

- Propose solutions that maximize regional resources to benefit communities with unique (maybe more pronounced) education and workforce needs, like those resulting from a high cost of living commensurate with service job salaries, or connectivity challenges stemming from poor infrastructure.

- Incentivize employers to partner with all educational institutions (P-12 schools, community and 4-year colleges, plus graduate programs) earmarking funds for these partnerships if necessary.

- Consider policies that will modernize child labor laws and allow students to acquire skills earlier.

Spotlights

“All students should be able to shadow different career paths while in school and benefit from internships and technical education if desired. Often one’s perception of a job/career is different from the reality. If a student was able to experience a work place beforehand, they may be better equipped to decide if it’s a job they can successfully undertake.”

– Kim Ghodsean, Pharmacist, Stop & Shop (Brooklyn, NY)

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“What we love about the youth is that they bring energy...[Policymakers should] open up laws that indicate when a 15-year-old can work, and how much/often.”

– Tony Fernandez, Owner, Chick-Fil-A (Durham, NC)
Get into schools and workplaces to learn what’s happening on the ground and inform decision-making beyond the policy briefs that come across your desk.

Pay attention to (validated) data.

Consider differences in communities and pursue policies that promote equity in terms of funding, program and industry access, and the inequities that can persist along the continuum (resulting in a less diverse workforce, and in some cases less healthy communities) if unaddressed.

Be mindful of differences in organizational adaptability / nimbleness in adoption of and implementation of tools or solutions.

Check your partisanship or “agenda” at the door when advocating for students and workers.

“Clear roadblocks” to fruitful collaboration across ed and the workforce instead of implementing costly mandates that don’t account for the realities of practitioners.

Spotlights

“At the local level, counties can address the housing and cost of living crisis, thereby allowing people the financial flexibility to take risks and do what they are interested in. The struggle to live beyond the margin is what keeps people from pursuing interesting ideas. We can’t encourage our young people to explore and learn from failure if they can’t afford to pay rent and buy food.”

– Luke Evslin, Co-Founder Kamanu Composites & Kauai County Council Member

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“Teachers need to be exposed to or aware of how schools, business and community orgs are partnering to help our students. Learning to connect beyond the classroom walls should be part of the [teacher prep] programs.”

– Kelly Miyamura, Workforce Alignment Specialist, Hawaii P-20 Center (Honolulu, HI)
“In order for people entering the workplace to be best prepared, I believe there should be coursework for students in high school and college to explore the opportunities and/or careers that require a higher level of financial and technical literacy in our ever evolving marketplace and the global economy.”

– Fadi Karadsheh, Director of Systems Operations, New York Stock Exchange (New York, NY)

“There should be a clear communication pathway between industry, education, and policy makers. Policy makers should have their eyes and ears on what is happening in our state both holistically and in our local communities in order to support economic growth.”

– Greg Biancci, Program Manager, Microsoft Philanthropies (Seattle, WA)

“Higher ed teacher prep programs don’t seem to prepare teachers for the cultural and linguistic diversity most will face in their student populations.”

– Alesha McCauley, ESL Senior Administrator, Wake County Schools (Wake, NC)

“Ed should serve as a conduit to industry with students exposed to information that is useful, to survive and thrive wherever they end up.”

– Adam Smith, CTE Director, Cheney School District (Cheney, WA)
Even More Insights from Practitioners in the Field

Education Professionals

- “We have a lot of work to do to break the stigma that exists within communities about careers, with some widespread misunderstanding among folks who have not worked in ‘blue collar’ jobs around what those career opportunities really look like. We must stop thinking about a degree as the only goal and think more about what kids want to do with their lives, helping align the appropriate training and education to get there.”
  – Dr. Wayne D. Lewis, Jr., Kentucky Commissioner of Education (Frankfort, KY)

- “There is a lot of inconsistency in teacher education certification (EC) programs, therefore resulting in varying level of teacher competency and quality. Ensuring greater alignment in teacher prep programs would provide a level playing field for schools, students, and classrooms. Policy can address discrepancy by ensuring there are higher and more consistent standards for EC settings, regardless of of the funding source.”
  – Alyson Marguerat, Director, Lincoln Park Preparatory Germania (Chicago, IL)

- “Businesses tell teachers they are dealing with some of the same issues in the workplace that teachers do in the classroom. If we could get all the partners to coordinate, I believe we could bring economic development to our area.”
  – Caroline McWhite, Career Development Coordinator, Wilkes County Schools (Wilkes, NC)

Spotlight
DelawarePathways.org

"It's about choice. We want students who are able to understand who they are as a learner and their interest and choose applicable coursework to get ahead in life. There are no dead ends – you get early college credit or employment – and no wrong choices: it's about self-discovery and what step you want to take. Not doing something is the only non-option. Just don't stop. Kids are already making adult decisions so let’s help them make ones that pay off."
– Luke Rhine, Director, Career & Technical Education, STEM Initiative at Delaware Department of Education (Dover, DE)
2018-2019
Teacher Advisory Council Members

- Jarred Amato, 2015-2017 Tennessee Teacher Fellow
- Lorna Baniaga-Lee, 2016-2018 Hawaii Teacher Fellow
- Jana Bryant, 2013-2015 Kentucky Teacher Fellow
- Amy Clancy, 2016-2018 Kentucky Teacher Fellow
- Michael Dunlea, 2014-2015 National Teacher Fellow (New Jersey)
- David Edelman, 2015-2017 National Teacher Fellow (New York)
- Sarah Giddings, 2015-2017 National Teacher Fellow (Michigan)
- Mamie Hall, 2015-2017 North Carolina Teacher Voice Fellow
- Guy Hill, 2015-2017 North Carolina Teacher Voice Fellow
- Robyn Howton, 2015-2017 National Teacher Fellow (Delaware)
- Elizabeth Lovett, 2015-2017 Kentucky Teacher Fellow
- Jonathon Medeiros, 2014-2016 Hawaii Teacher Fellow
- Beth Oswald, 2014-2015 National Teacher Fellow (Wisconsin)
- Esther Park, 2016-2018 Hawaii Teacher Fellow
- Freeda Pirilllis, 2015-2017 National Teacher Fellow (Illinois)
- Douglas Price, 2016-2018 North Carolina Teacher Voice Fellow
- Tammie Schrader, 2013-2014 National Teacher Fellow (Washington)
- Melissa Tracy, 2013-2015 National Teacher Fellow (Delaware)
- Rebecca Wattleworth, 2013-2015 National Teacher Fellow (Illinois)

www.hopestreetgroup.org/teacherfellowship