



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

TO Interested Parties

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FM3 Research

RE: Washington Voter Views of Career-Connected Learning

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Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of Washington voters to assess their attitudes about education beyond high school, including Career-Connected Learning programs.¹ The study found that most voters feel that students graduate Washington high schools lacking real-world skills -- and that voters have a clear appetite for increasing young adults' exposure to different types of on-the-job learning opportunities. **A program like Career-Connected Learning, which pairs teaching real-world skills with earning credit and money, is broadly appealing to Washington voters, with three-quarters who believe it should be expanded to more young adults.**

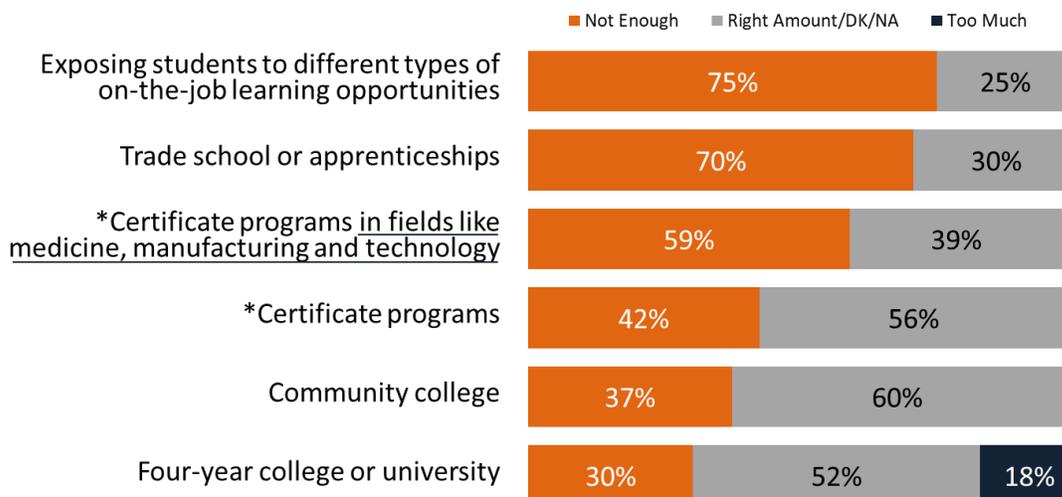
Key detailed findings from the survey include:

- **Strong majorities believe not enough is being done to expose students to on-the-job learning opportunities, trade school, or certificate programs in high-demand fields.** For the most part, Washington voters believe that enough is being done to make community college and four-year college available to high school students (with 60% and 52%, respectively, holding this view as illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page). However, voters strongly believe that *more* should be done to expose students to different types of on-the-job learning in general (75%), and to trade school and apprenticeships (70%) and certificate programs (42%) more specifically. When it comes to certificate programs, providing context specifying they are in "fields like medicine, manufacturing and technology" makes nearly three in five (59%) say that more needs to be done.

¹ **Methodology:** From Sept. 26-Oct. 4, 2018, FM3 completed 835 interviews (online and via landlines and cell phones) with likely November 2020 voters in Washington. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-3.5% at the 95% confidence level. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.

Figure 1: Need for Different Types of Opportunities After High School

I am going to read you a list of types of educational experiences students can have after high school. I'd like you to tell me whether too much is being done, not enough is being done, or the right amount is being done to make these opportunities available in Washington state.



- Voters largely believe schools are leaving Washington students unprepared for the real world.** More than four in five (82%) agree that "schools do not do enough to prepare students for the real world" -- with more than half (51%) "strongly" holding this view. Similar shares agree that "schools do not do enough to teach real-world skills" (82%) and that "schools do not do enough to provide hands-on learning experiences" (77%).

Figure 2: Attitudes About Student Preparation

I would like to read you some statements about education in K-12 and beyond in Washington State. Please tell me whether you generally agree or disagree.

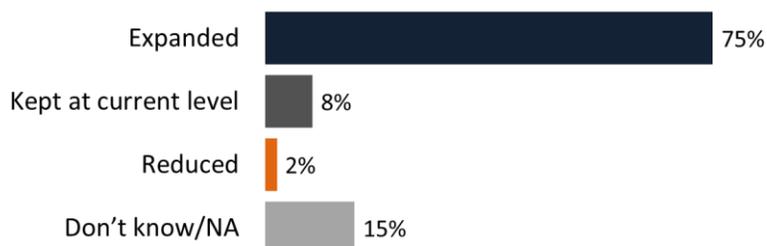
Statement	Total Agree	Total Disagree
Schools do not do enough to teach real-world skills	82%	14%
Schools do not do enough to prepare students for the real world	82%	15%
Schools do not do enough to provide hands-on learning experiences	77%	13%

- Three-quarters believe Career-Connected Learning programs should be expanded.** Given a brief description of Career-Connected Learning programs (shown on the next page), fully 75 percent said they believe these programs should be offered to more students.

"Career Connected Learning programs for public school students can include a variety of experiences and programs at different levels. Examples include career fairs, worksite tours, job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships. There are different models and examples in different schools throughout Washington State, but in general, students who participate in these programs are offered formal opportunities to learn at the workplace through Career Connected Learning."

Figure 3: Desire for Expansion of Career-Connected Learning

Do you think Career Connected Learning programs in Washington should be expanded, kept at their current level, or reduced?



This enthusiasm for expansion of Career Connected Learning cuts across major demographic and geographic categories, including:

- 79% of women and 72% of men;
- 79% of voters under 50 and 72% of voters ages 50 and older;
- 79% of Democrats, 72% of independents and 72% of Republicans;
- 76% of parents; and
- No less than 70% of voters in any region of the state.

Notably, fully 92% of voters found a short paragraph (below) about differences in learning styles, and the value of hands-on experiences with an expert or mentor, a persuasive reason to support expansion of Career-Connected Learning -- nearly two-thirds (63%) labeled it "very convincing."

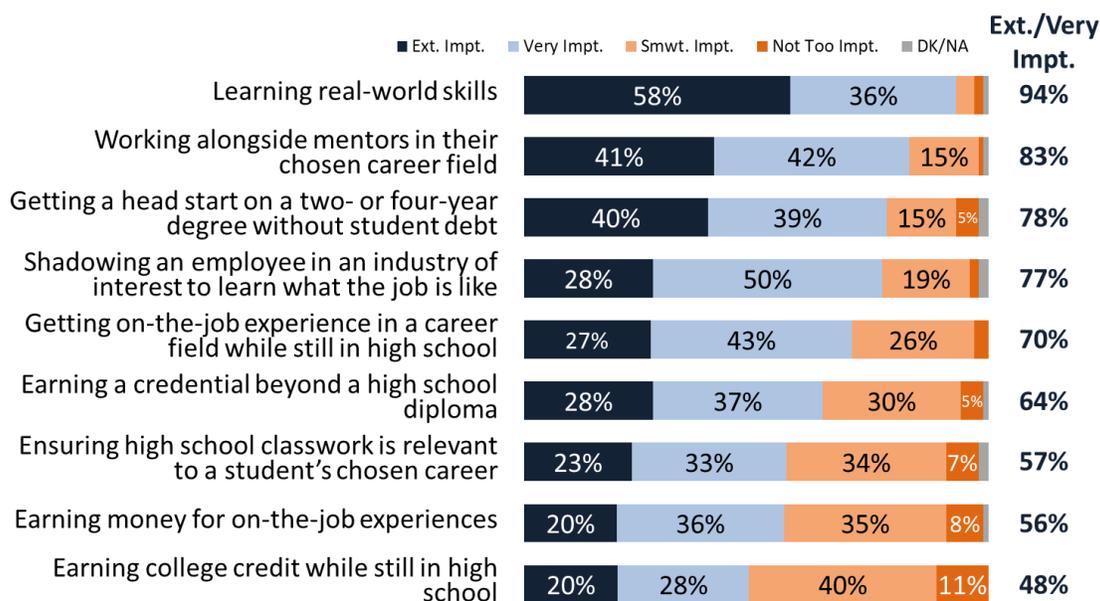
"Every child learns in different ways. Too many students spend time in the classroom listening to lectures when what works best for them might be to work with their hands or try a project alongside an expert or mentor. Career Connected Learning programs are a great way for students to not only learn new things – but to discover how they learn best. That's a real-world skill that lasts a lifetime."

- **Real-world skills, on-the-job experiences, and credits without debt are the most appealing elements of Career-Connected Learning.** Voters broadly see "learning real-world skills" as an important of Career Connected Learning (with 94% rating it "extremely" or "very important"), as well as "working alongside

mentors in their chosen career field" (83%). Elements that emphasize exposure to new opportunities and real-world skills rank more highly than ones that focus squarely on earning credits or credentials (though those are important to majorities), underscoring the centrality of on-the-job experiences in voters' attitudes about life beyond high school.

Figure 4: Aspects of Career-Connected Learning

I am going to read you a list of elements of the kinds of Career Connected Learning programs proposed for high school students. These may be part of some students' experience, but not necessarily all, as programs and student preferences vary. Please tell me how important you believe that element is: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?



- **One specific program, Career Launch, was also highly popular.** Given the description below, Washington voters rated Career Launch a 76.2 on a 100-point feeling thermometer, and one-quarter (24%) gave it the highest rating, 100.

"Career Launch programs pair meaningful, on-the-job experience with classroom learning relevant to a career path. Students can earn both high school and college academic credit, get great on-the-job experience, and earn money while working with high-quality supervision and mentorship. Time in the classroom is focused on the skills students need to be a competitive candidate for a sustainable, attainable, growth-oriented and fulfilling career. At the end of Career Launch, students will be a competitive candidate for a job in their chosen industry and will have college credits and a valuable credential beyond a high school degree."

In sum, Washington voters see a clear need for programs that expose students to different career paths and offer opportunities for students to develop real-world skills. Career-Connected Learning and Career Launch appeal to voters because they offer students the chance to develop those skills, explore their options, and earn credits that will set them up for career success and less student loan debt.