

Career Pathways Initiative

THE CHALLENGE: According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics there are more than 12,000 career options for our students to consider. And, according to a national survey examining views on the readiness of new entrants to the U.S. workforce, most employers feel that the future workforce is ill-prepared. Employers, more than ever, are expecting young people to arrive with a core set of basic knowledge and the ability to apply their skills in the workplace.

In addition to the basics of reading, writing, and math, national reports have identified numerous skills that students will need to be successful in the 21st century. Social and intellectual skills will both drive and determine economic success, intensifying competition for well-educated people. New job entrants will need work readiness skills such as oral and written communication, time management, critical thinking, problem solving, personal accountability, and the ability to work effectively with others. And, they must be prepared for jobs involving a high level of technology skills, complex communication, and expert thinking.

So, how can we give our youth opportunities to learn about many different careers? How can they see the connections between what they learn in school and the world of work? How can we provide them with the skills for the 21st century? How will they find a career they will love?

THE SOLUTION: One of the most effective ways to help students navigate among thousands of different occupations and provide them the numerous skills to enter the workforce is through a pathway to a career. To prepare students, Newport News Public Schools has developed the Career Pathways initiative.

This career development initiative encompassing prekindergarten through grade 12 provides students a pathway to a career through interrelated courses, as well as curricular, extra-curricular, and service learning experiences. It also provides a seamless transition from high school to postsecondary opportunities whether they enter the workforce or pursue higher education.

Based upon local market needs in the Hampton Roads area and student interests, Newport News Public Schools has developed eight career pathways using research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education. Starting in high school, students will have the option of choosing between:

- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
- Business, Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Manufacturing
- Science Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
- Health Science

Career Readiness Skills

Career Pathways help students build the following skills:

Speaking & Listening: Conveying and comprehending oral messages clearly.

Problem Solving: Applying logic to decision making and problem solving.

Work Ethic: Being prompt, flexible, and “doing the right thing.”

Positive Attitude: Being cooperative, taking direction and correction willingly, being eager to learn, being pleasant and polite, and getting along with others.

Independence & Initiative: Displaying initiative and demonstrating the ability to work independently.

Self-Presentation: Wearing appropriate clothes, speaking well, and acting in a professional manner.

Attendance: Being on time and following a specific schedule.

Teamwork: Being courteous, understanding, and listening, and knowing how to compromise.