

HAWAII‘I’S CAREER-READY AGENDA

Preparing high school graduates for successful transitions into careers is an important part of the national education agenda. In Hawai‘i, more than in other states, it’s especially important to merge career preparation with college-preparation efforts. Hawai‘i ranks 10th in the nation in the percentage of jobs that will require a postsecondary degree by the year 2018.¹ For that reason, a priority of Hawai‘i’s career-ready efforts is to encourage students to enroll in and complete postsecondary education, including two-year degrees, technical education, and certificate programs. As some high school students will choose to go directly into the workforce, another priority for Hawai‘i’s education and labor leaders is to join together to best support and prepare these career-pathway students. Instead of two separate academic “tracks,” a single, rigorous course of study is needed to prepare Hawai‘i’s K-12 students for college and career requirements.

The study illustrates how the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s new K-12 Common Core State Standards align with the abilities Hawai‘i employers’ seek in their employees. DOE “General Learner Outcome” goals are also mapped to specific skills and qualities sought after by employers.

Over 120 Hawai‘i employers participated in the updated Hawai‘i Career Ready Study through interviews and a survey that focused on “living wage” career pathways. The summary results below convey the priorities of surveyed employers hiring in today’s more constricted economy.

	<i>% finding skills extremely/very important</i>	<i>% finding new hires extremely/adequately prepared</i>
Work Habits & Attitudes	95%	54%
Communication Skills	89%	60%
Mathematics Skills	32%	38%

The pages that follow provide employers’ perspectives on the importance of specific abilities and skills, and background data on the interviewees and survey participants. The full Hawai‘i Career Ready Study is available through Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education: www.p20hawaii.org.

Local interviews with employers and workforce experts included the following reflections:

“We’re not doing enough to recognize a segment of the population who goes directly in the workforce. . . . We need to make sure we don’t lose sight of the fact that a segment of the workforce needs a solid high school background to enter the workforce.”

Workers need multiple skill sets

“Jobs are being consolidated. Before you had a sales person and a back office technical expert—now these jobs are merged, and employees are expected to have skills for both.”

Experience-formal or informal-counts

“Students who have done volunteer work tend to have a better understanding of asking questions, communicating, and taking initiative. They understand why they are there.”

Work ethic is key

“We look for characteristics over content knowledge. Skills can be learned, but work ethic and initiative are harder to teach.”

Lifelong learning is highly valued

“On-the-job learning is so important. Employers don’t always have the resources for formal training programs. The ability to learn—and a value of learning—is critical.”

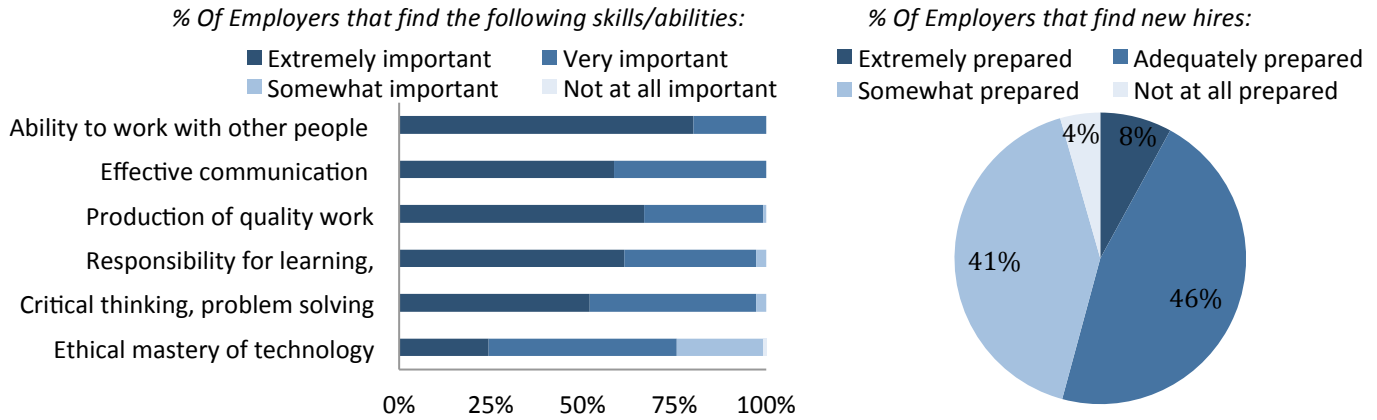
We share responsibility for the future

“I think about this a lot. How much can the schools [do]? I think it’s a shared responsibility between parents and the education system. No matter what, if we’re supposed to be educating children for their future—they are our future—we need to be preparing them with the skills they need.”

¹ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce: *Projections of Job and Education Requirements Through*

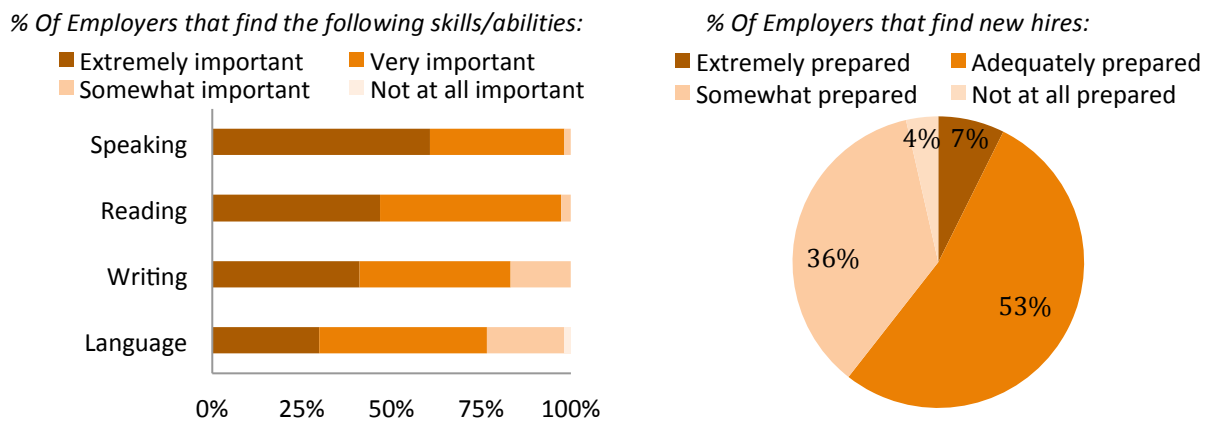
Habits and attitudes are the most critical—and hardest to teach—skills for success in work.

“Soft skills keep coming up. They want employees to understand instruction, show up on time, dress properly, communicate well. They say ‘we will train for our business, just give me someone with common sense skills.’”



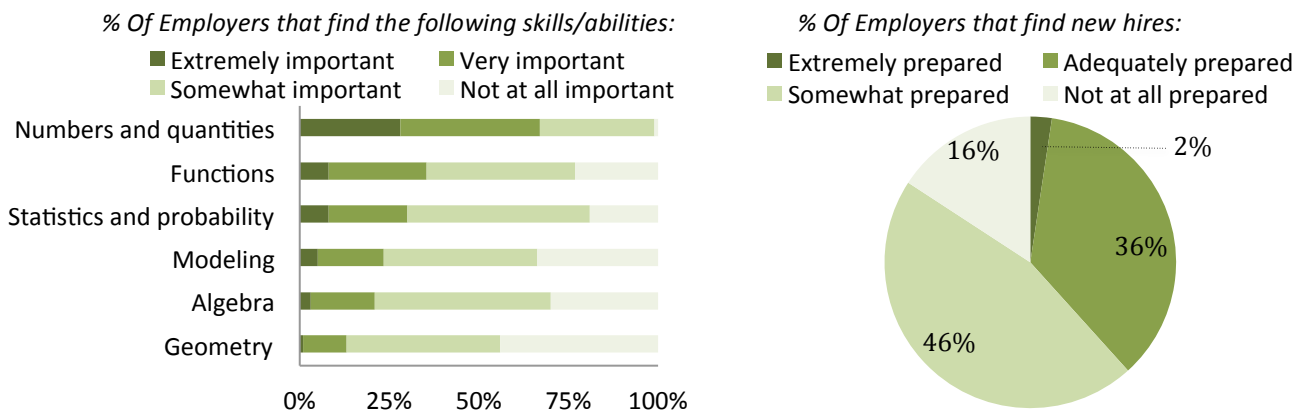
Effective communication relies on English language arts skills.

“It takes [technical] skills to execute the process, but communication is the glue. We need to know what was accomplished in a day, whether it’s updated the system or verbal or written communication.”



Mathematics skills are less frequently required, but basic math is essential.

“Our employees are required to use basic math to measure things out, and do quick conversion calculations between inches and metric system. They also need to understand plans and communicate to their team and boss.”



Work Habits and Attitudes	Communication Skills	Mathematics Skills
Map to Department of Education General Learner Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-directed Learner ▪ Community Contributor ▪ Complex Thinker ▪ Quality Producer ▪ Effective Communicator ▪ Ethical and Effective User of Technology 	Map to national Common Core Anchor Standards in English Language Arts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading ▪ Writing ▪ Speaking ▪ Language 	Map to national Common Core Anchor Standards in Mathematical Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Numbers and Quantities ▪ Algebra ▪ Functions ▪ Modeling ▪ Statistics and Probability ▪ Geometry

Interview Participants

Industry or Sub-Industry	2010 Job Count	2020 Projections	Living Wage Career Path Examples
Agriculture	6,130	6,030	Field worker -> Technician
Banking	8,940	9,150	Teller -> Financial Services Officer
Clean Energy	3,816	5,623	Solar Installer -> Supervisor
Construction	28,390	36,380	Apprentice -> Carpenter
Government	74,050	76,290	Resident Services Coordinator -> Assistant Manager (military, civilian)
Health Care	50,280	60,840	Environmental Services Worker -> Assistant Technician
Hotels	34,000	38,400	Guest Services Associate -> Guest Services Manager
Legal Services	3,575	3,712	Utility Clerk -> Legal Secretary
TOTAL HI EMPLOYMENT	651,740	727,440	

Job Count Data Source: State of Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Survey Participants

Industry/Sub-Industry	Survey
Agriculture	1%
Banking	7%
Clean Energy	4%
Communications	4%
Construction	2%
Education	17%
Government	6%
Health Care	10%
Hospitality	13%
Information Technology	2%
Insurance	1%
Legal Services	3%
Military	1%
Nonprofit & Social Services	7%
Professional services	10%
Retail	5%
Transportation	1%
Utilities	1%
Other	5%

Company Size	Survey
1 – 49 employees	13%
50 – 99 employees	10%
100 – 249 employees	20%
250 – 499 employees	12%
500 – 999 employees	14%
1000+ employees	31%

The *Hawai'i Career Ready Study: 2012 Update* and this Executive Summary were prepared by Storyline Consulting.



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