

## New Skills for Youth Phase One Snapshot: Hawai'i

The Hawai'i New Skills for Youth (NSFY) team spent Phase One developing and beginning to implement a plan that aligns the NSFY work with its previous college and career readiness efforts, including those from Race to the Top. The team built on existing state and local innovations related to employability skills and student communications to lay the foundations for reforms that will help the state meet the needs of its increasingly diverse economy.

### Foundations for the Work

Over the last 40 years Hawai'i's economy has shifted. For many years the state relied heavily on the agricultural industry with over two-thirds of Hawai'i's job requiring only a high school diploma for entry. Today the economy is far more diversified and Hawai'i is one of the top 10 states in the nation with jobs that will require some form of postsecondary education by 2018.<sup>i</sup>

The state is unique in its island geography and operates as one statewide school district, making Hawai'i the 10th largest school district in the country.

To accommodate the state's economic changes and new demand for a highly educated workforce, the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) has prioritized college and career readiness reforms by using public-private partnerships and an active P-20 Council. Beginning in 2008, the state instituted many reforms as part of its participation in the

federal Race to the Top initiative. These reforms have resulted in student performance gains and lasting policy changes related to college readiness. Hawai'i is one of only five states that include in their accountability system both a standalone measure of career readiness and a meta-indicator of both college and career readiness. However, the state is acutely aware of the need to continue reforming its career preparation systems.

### Work during Phase One

The Hawai'i cross-sector NSFY team contracted with an external reviewer to conduct a needs assessment of Hawai'i's career preparation system. The reviewer found that the state had strong engagement and enthusiasm from employer partners, a strong data system, and high-quality career pathway curricula in the Hawai'i Academies career high schools. The reviewer stated that the state could further develop these areas of strength by hiring a liaison focused specifically on coordinating employer partner engagement, as well as

*Phase One of JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s New Skills for Youth grant began in May 2016 and went through October 2016. With bold visions for improving career readiness in K-12 education, each Phase One state spent the grant period performing a diagnostic assessment of their career preparation system and preparing for implementation of a new action plan. This snapshot describes Hawai'i's experience in Phase One, including promising practices and innovations.*

adding certifications to student outcomes data. Additionally, the reviewer noted the challenge in Career Technical Education (CTE) teacher recruitment, as no postsecondary institution in Hawai'i currently offers a preparatory program that leads to CTE licensure.

Informed by this assessment and the state's previous and ongoing reform efforts, the team developed a three-year strategic plan with five major objectives:

- Formalize Hawai'i's new statewide industry-led partnership and cross-sector planning process so business and education stakeholders can continue to collaboratively identify needed high-skill, high-demand career pathways at both the state and regional levels;
- Increase the number of CTE concentrators who enter a postsecondary program of study by strengthening the rigor and relevance of high-quality career pathways;
- Leverage Hawai'i's successful P-20 infrastructure to strengthen the career pathways portion of statewide college, career and community efforts, including accountability measures;
- Improve the preparation and professional development of new and existing CTE

teachers and counselors to help students obtain credentials of value; and

- Create the infrastructure and capacity to grow and sustain Hawai'i's sector and cross-sector efforts.

### *Identifying Employability Skills*

In June 2015, the Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations released a [report](#) on soft skills related to industry employability. The report analyzed survey results from employers in priority industries like construction, health care, hospitality and information technology on the soft skills most valued when hiring new employees. The employability skills identified included communication, dependability and teamwork, initiative, problem-solving and strong work ethic. During Phase One, HIDEOE, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i, cross-walked these skills with the K-12 General Learner Outcomes (GLOs).

The University of Hawai'i system (UH) analyzed and incorporated the employability skills list into its Institutional Learner Outcomes (ILOs) list during Phase One. After this analysis, the NSFY team created a single document listing soft skills across secondary and postsecondary education and employment. With this document, the state can ensure that

Hawaii Department of Education General Learner Outcomes (GLOs)	University of Hawaii Institutional Learner Outcomes (ILOs)	Industry Employability /Soft Skills
Effective Communicator	Effective Communication	Communication, Listening
Community Contributor	Community Awareness and Social Responsibility/ Values and Citizenship	Dependability/Reliability, Teamwork, Flexibility/ Adaptability, Mentoring/ Coaching
Self-directed Learner	Quantitative Reasoning	Initiative
Critical Thinker	Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Information Literacy	Problem-solving/ Decision-making Works well under pressure
Quality Producer	Career Preparation	Strong work ethic
Effective and Ethical User of Technology	Technological Competency	

curriculum GLOs and ILOs are informed by employer partner needs and efforts to measure and improve student attainment of these skills can be coordinated across sectors.

Going forward, HIDOE plans to implement a statewide secondary school GLO certificate and will work with UH to align the GLO certificate with the postsecondary soft skills certificate currently in place at Kapiolani Community College.

### *Online Guidance for Students*

During Phase One, the Hawai'i NSFY team focused on creating resources for schools and students to guide career preparation with input from secondary, postsecondary and employer partners. The state already uses the [My Future Hawai'i](#) website for middle and high school students to track career exploration, course completion and personal transition plans. Students can also use that site to apply to a UH system campus. In postsecondary, students use [UH Star](#) to create their graduation pathway and complete degree programs in a timely manner. The NSFY team decided to build on both of those sites with its sector mapping project.

The Hawaii Industry Sectors website, once launched, will provide real-time labor market information on job opportunities, required skills, growth potential and expected earnings. The site will also show which companies are hiring by geographic region and will provide links to current job openings, with the ultimate objective of having a "landing page" for every job in the state. The site and its career exploration tools have undergone extensive beta testing and will be opened to the public in the coming months.

To provide the in-depth data required for this website, the NSFY team developed a statewide strategy for supporting industry sector partnerships. This strategy leverages state relationships with employer associations and convenes industry representatives to provide labor market analysis and input on which skills are needed for specific jobs. The Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i partnered with the University of Hawaii Community Colleges,



Figure 1. Sector mapping project website

HIDOE, and the Hawai'i Bankers Association to implement this strategy in the banking industry and with the CIO Council of Hawaii in the cybersecurity industry. They will continue this process with health occupations and biotechnology going forward.

## Looking Ahead

The state is now committed to implementing the rest of its three-year plan. This effort includes implementing a statewide method of measuring and assessing outcomes for GLOs, as well as continuing the sector mapping work in more industries. HIDOE plans to increase access to high-quality career pathway options using the existing curricula of the Hawai'i Academies as a foundation. Many of these planned reforms are based on innovations already in practice at individual schools within the state, so they have been tested already within Hawai'i's unique island context.

The Hawai'i NSFY cross-sector team is focused on sustaining the reforms of its strategic plan. HIDOE hired a coordinator for this work, who will also act as a liaison with UH and employer partners. Additionally, the team has begun conversations with local foundations to explore additional funding opportunities. The state's P-20 Council is focused on aligning this work with its other initiatives so that as these reforms reach the classroom and workplace, they are clear and coordinated.

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<sup>i</sup> Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2010). *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018* (Rep.). Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.