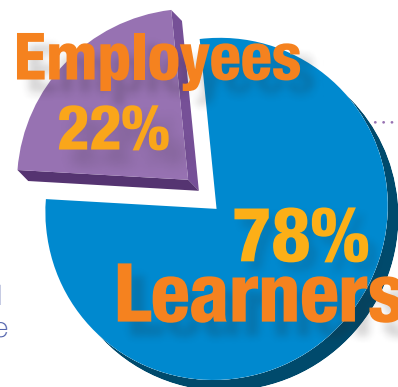


READERS **respond**

POLL RESULTS

Is the Goal of K–12 to Produce Employees or Learners?

More than 75% of those who responded agree that the goal of K–12 is to produce lifetime learners who can adjust to the ever-changing workplace.



Create Fearless Learners

Our job today is to produce eager and adaptable learners. Since we can only blindly try to predict the jobs that will be available to our students 12 years from now, we must focus on producing fearless students who are able to quickly learn the skills necessary for whatever task is presented to them.

*Mary Catton
American Academy Charter School
Lone Tree, Colorado*

Produce Employees

The United States is the only industrialized nation in the world completely dependent on immigration to fill jobs in science and technology. One reason is the U.S. K–12 philosophy: focus on students merely meeting minimum graduation requirements rather than providing the SciTech skills needed to succeed in today's global economy.

*Bjorn Norstrom
Colchester Middle School
Colchester, Vermont*

Yes to Both

K–12 Education should prepare students to be successful employees and successful learners. However, the goal of preparing students to be lifelong learners is of greatest benefit and is the more sustainable skill. In times of change—and we are in times of change—the learning, not the learned, inherit the earth. A learner can learn to be a successful employee, but an employee who is

not a learner will not be a successful employee long.

*Don Knezek
ISTE
Washington, DC*

Manage the Gap

Our job is to help students learn to manage the gap between what they know and what they need to know. Ethically, we can do nothing less when the half-life of what we've learned decreases continually. If we do not develop learners, we will not develop employable people.

*Dorothy Fuller
Black Hills State University
Spearfish, South Dakota*

Neither Is the Primary Goal

Employability and the ability to learn are both admirable, yet neither should be the primary goal of K–12 education. Rather, the goal should be to educate 21st century citizens who have the intellectual, digital, and social skills that promote an ethical and humane stewardship of their local and global communities while enhancing the quality of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for all.

*Joe Gotchy
Teacher/Consultant
Auburn, Washington*

Remember the Mantra

The over-used mantra “lifelong learners” will always be the key for education. Business tells educators that they plan on retraining 90% of their work force upon hiring. Our students will

serve six different employers, on average. They must be learning-efficient to be successful professionally, socially, and personally.

*Howard J. Martin
Austin Independent School District
Austin, Texas*

If You Had to Choose

In which would you want to confidently place our economic future? Employees that are capable of continuous learning are essential for the survival of the ever-changing marketplace and for the security of the standard of living we sustain in the United States.

*Martha Kennelly
Mid East Suffolk Teacher Center
Ridge, New York*

Times Are Changing

As long as the world doesn't change, producing employees would be adequate. Producing learners, however, provides employers with the human resources to meet their changing needs.

*Timothy P. Williams
Manheim Township School District
Lancaster, Pennsylvania*

Let Students Decide

The goal is to educate the whole child ultimately empowering them to choose the world of work or pursue academic studies. It is not about limiting their options during the K–12 years, but teaching skills to find success in whatever they choose.

*Emmy Hartney
St. John Baptist Middle School
Draper, Utah*