

Priority: Civic and Corporate Involvement

Encourage greater civic and corporate involvement in forging stronger connections between education and work opportunities.

Policy Context

In recent years, state policymakers and agency leaders have addressed challenges confronting Georgia’s communities by investing in broadband infrastructure, increasing access to physical and behavioral health services, and tackling poverty through education and economic development initiatives.

The pandemic did not diminish these priorities. In fact, local school systems, county commissions, and regional health agencies have received billions in federal COVID funds to scale current development efforts and address barriers to community transformation.

Community assets are present, but they are not always coordinated in ways that allow local leaders to expand access to education and workforce opportunities. Local leaders must focus on immediate challenges while simultaneously creating long-term plans to transform personal well-being and community resilience.

Community transformation requires a strong birth-to-work strategy, drawing on the expertise and shared commitment of leaders across several sectors, such as early learning, K-12 education, post-secondary education, health, housing, and business and industry.

Within each community, there is a role for all stakeholders. Business and industry partners can address immediate community challenges by leveraging their own skills and talents to help prepare the workforce of tomorrow. Civic partners can array services and supports to integrate career preparation and work-based learning practices into K-12 and post-secondary environments.

Together, state, regional, and local education, business, and civic leaders can address the factors that limit economic mobility and post-secondary attainment.

Key Outcome

Increase career pathway completion rates to 60% by 2023. The current completion rate is 43%.

EdQuest Framework

Clear Pathways to Post-Secondary Success

Supportive Learning Environments

Quality Leadership

Power Strategies

Clear Pathways to Post-Secondary Success

Encouraging business and industry leaders to co-develop career pathways programming with K-12 and higher education partners and expand access to work-based learning opportunities in high-demand career areas.

Supportive Learning Environments

School and community leaders expand access to early college and real-world learning opportunities, e.g., Advanced Placement, apprenticeships, career pathway participation, dual enrollment, internships, summer jobs.

Getting Started: Focusing on Quick Wins

- State and community leaders should perform a policy and practice scan to determine what strategies are worth scaling and what state structures are most suitable for supporting local innovation.
- Local leaders should review current community strategies to ensure they address barriers to educational success and economic mobility, e.g., lack of access to health care, affordable housing, and transportation to strengthen their talent pipeline.
- State and community leaders should partner with post-secondary institutions and industry representatives to create or expand high-demand career pathways aligned to regional needs.

Sustaining Momentum Through 2033

Progress Metrics

Each of the priorities presented in the EdQuest State Policy Plan includes at least one outcome measure and a set of metrics that help state and community leaders know whether they are making progress. This profile includes a non-exhaustive list of measures that indicate if community-based partnerships are strengthening workforce alignment.

- Percent growth in students enrolled in real-world/applied learning experiences
- Completion rates for career pathways and apprenticeship programs
- Percent of students earning industry-recognized credentials
- Percent growth in number of STEM/STEAM certified schools.

State Leadership

State leaders can support civic and corporate involvement in several ways including:

- Expanding incentives for community and workforce partners to co-develop career-connected content and curricula, as well as expand access to real-world/applied learning opportunities, such as internships, externships, apprenticeships, and other cooperative opportunities.
- Developing local leaders' capacity to create seamless career pathways centered on regional workforce needs through training, technical assistance, and resource toolkits.

Building a Strong Foundation

State strengths and assets

University System of Georgia's Economic Development Division and Technical College System of Georgia's Office of Workforce Development

State post-secondary pathways infrastructure – Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE), dual enrollment, and apprenticeships

Georgia Department of Education's Office of Rural Education and Innovation, prioritizing cross-sector collaboration with post-secondary and workforce partners

Georgia State University's National Institute for School Success

Improving on current policy and practice

Georgia attracts businesses because of favorable economic and tax policies and its reputation as the Number 1 Place to Do Business for nine years running. However, retaining these businesses will require increasing alignment between education and workforce systems.

Businesses are employing multiple strategies to close skill and talent gaps. To increase the productivity and capability of current employees, businesses are relying on upskilling strategies that support the acquisition of specialized, technical skills. Corporate investment in community-based strategies is crucial because expanding the talent pool in a region ensures that industries can continue to grow and thrive.

Developing joint education and economic development strategies through intentional partnerships is the first step in a long-term agenda to more efficiently and effectively align education policy to support workforce needs.

Alignment with the North Star goal of 65% post-secondary attainment

Education and business partnerships are crucial to reaching the North Star goal. Currently, too many Georgians are underprepared for post-secondary education and workforce opportunities.

Meaningful and enduring cross-sector partnerships is a way to address and increase preparedness and success. The ultimate goal is for Georgia to have an educated and skilled workforce. Education and business sector leaders can and should coordinate and align their activities to promote career connected learning across K-12 and post-secondary success to meet Georgia's growing workforce needs – today and in the future.