



AMERICAN STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Exploring Earlier: Helping Middle School Students Discover Education/Career Opportunities

American Student Assistance

2018 | 30 November

THE PREMIER GATHERING OF CTE PROFESSIONALS



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The U.S. Widening Skills Gap

The forces transforming our job market.

Skills Gap Realities

Many signs indicate our labor force is not equipped for the workplace of the future, or even **today**.

- 40% of college grads lack the skills to perform their jobs.
- 60% of companies report unfilled jobs due to lack of qualified workers.
- 40% of employers report work not getting done due to a lack of skilled workers.
- 6.5M jobs remain unfilled, yet unemployment rate is 3.7%.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Harris Poll Study



Our Transforming Job Market

- Gray Wave
 - Baby boomers retiring and taking skills with them.
- Growing global competition
 - Low wages in emerging economies have drawn low-skill manufacturing offshore.
 - High wage, high-skilled manufacturing remains but requires better-trained workforce.
- Nearly 1 in 5 jobs today didn't exist in 1980.
 - Rapid technology progress causes constant catch up.
- Artificial Intelligence.
 - Replacing low-skill, middle-skill, and even some high-skill workers.

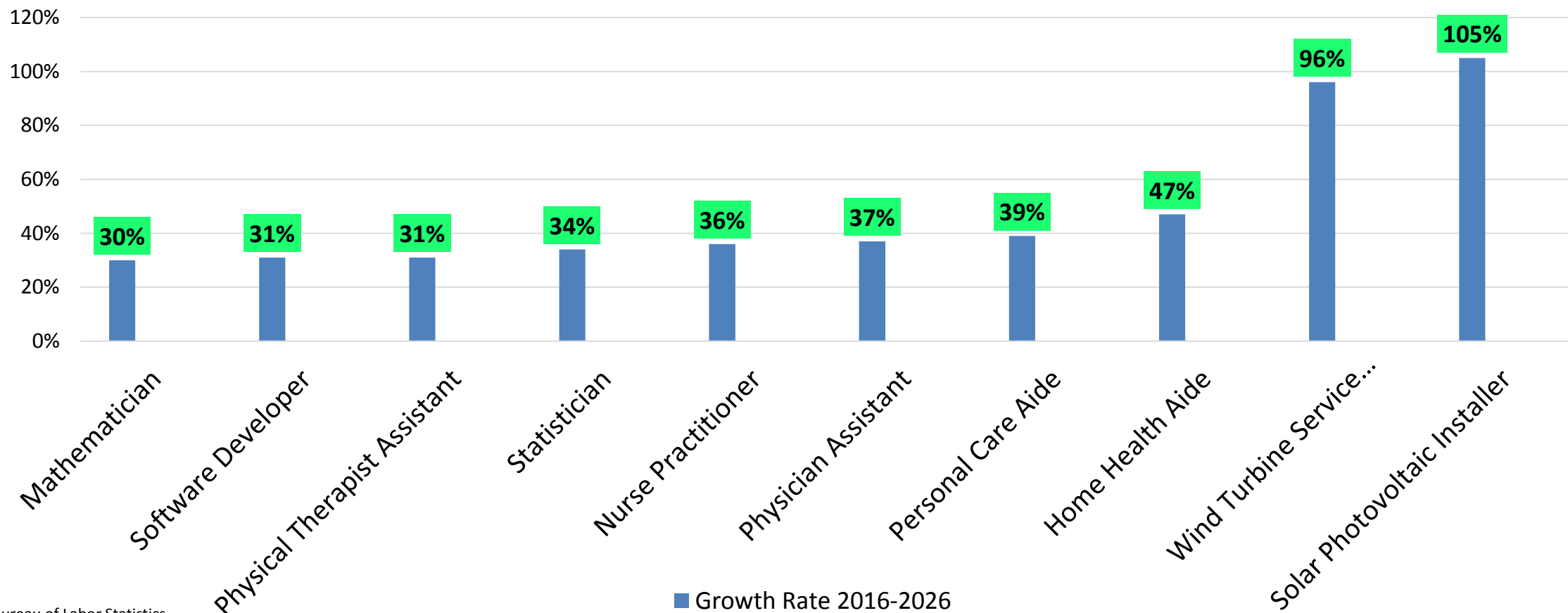


Why Higher Education Shouldn't Be Synonymous With College

Why traditional higher education shouldn't be just
what's next.



Fastest Growing Jobs In U.S.



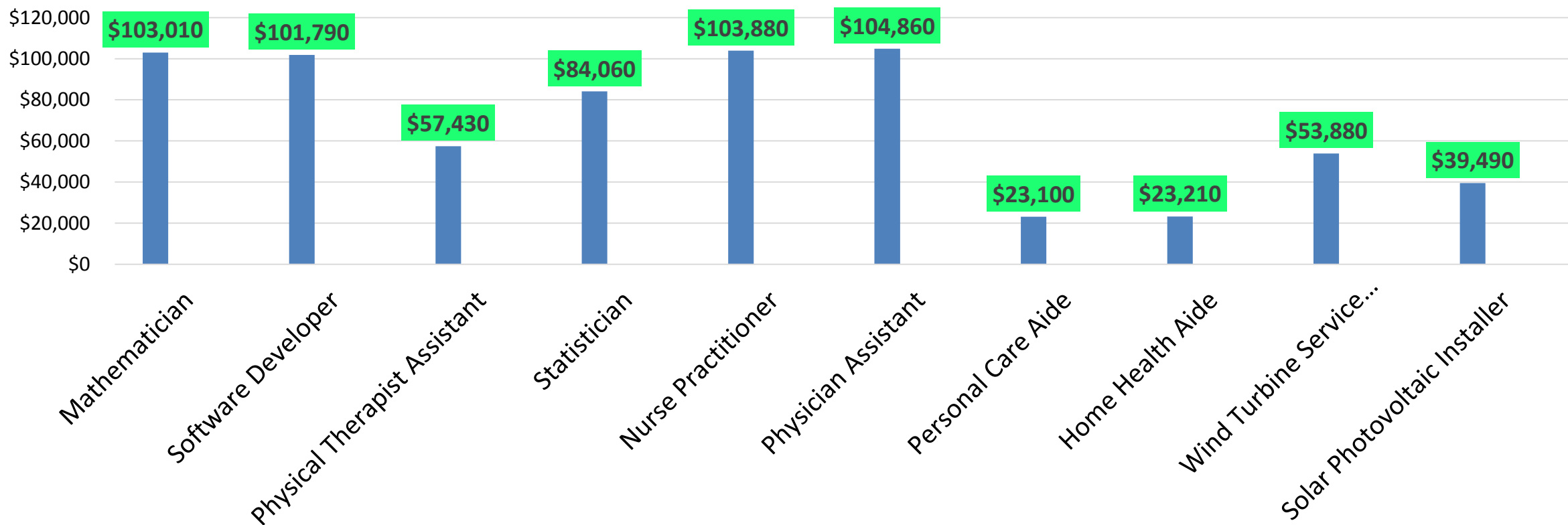
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

THE PREMIER GATHERING OF CTE PROFESSIONALS



Income Outlook

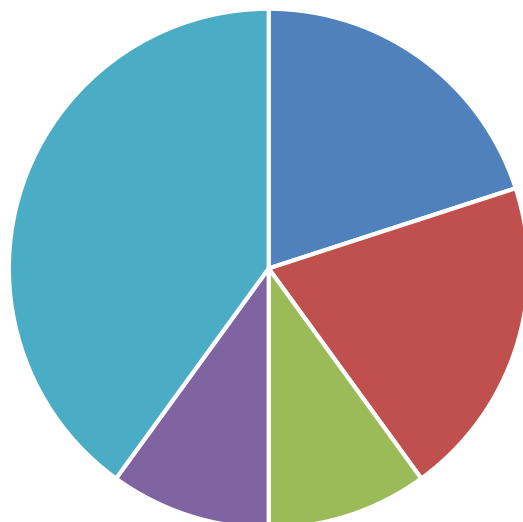
2017 Median Pay



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



Postsecondary Education Requirements



- High School Diploma
- Technical Non-Degree
- Associates Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree

High School Diploma

- Home Health Aide
- Personal Care Aide

Technical Non-Degree

- Solar Photovoltaic Installer
- Wind Turbine Service Technician

Associates Degree

- Physical Therapy Assistant

Bachelor's Degree

- Software Developer

Master's Degree

- Physician's Assistant
- Nurse Practitioner
- Statistician
- Mathematician



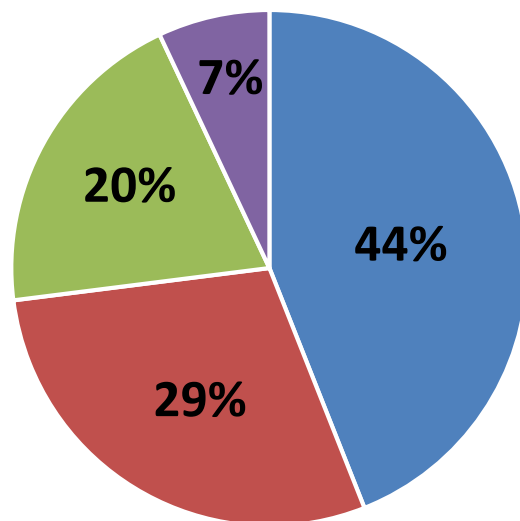
Unwise College Choices

- Making **emotional** college choices.
- College is just what's next.
- Failing to:
 - Understand the reasons for attending a certain school.
 - Understanding the true costs of attendance, the scope borrowed, and how to repay.
 - Considering career options before choosing a college or program.



College Choice Factors

Was your final choice of college primarily due to:



■ Good Academic Fit ■ Good Financial Fit ■ Good Emotional Fit ■ None of the Above

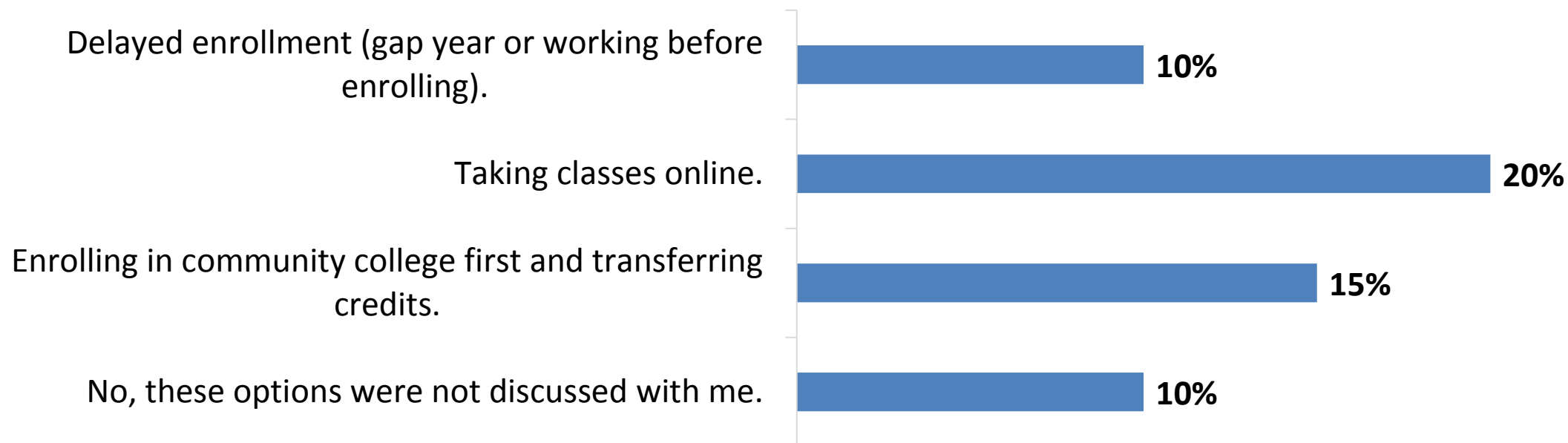
Source: ASA Life Delayed Study

Considered Factors:

- Location
- Major
- Cost
- Name recognition
- School counselor recommendation
- Friends
- Family

4-Year Degree Alternatives

When you were thinking about college, did family members or guidance/college counselors ever talk to you about the following alternative means of getting a degree from a 4-year school? Please select all that apply.



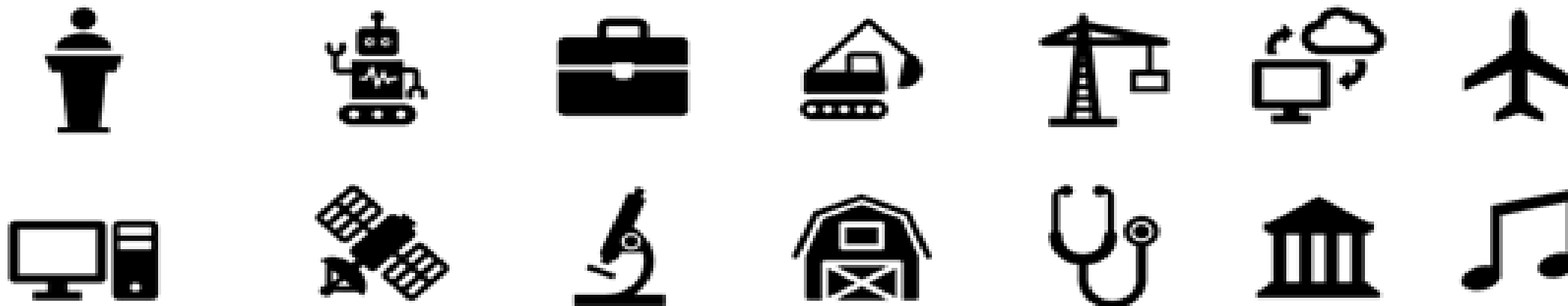
Source: ASA Life Delayed Study



Higher Education Planning

What major factor was missing from the college choice decision?

Careers





Problems Facing College Students Today

People change their careers 5-7 times in a lifetime.

3.7% of recent college grads are unemployed

71% of graduating students have debt

Only 52% of all college students graduate

60% of employers say college grads are not prepared for their jobs

\$1.5 Trillion Student Debt

51% of college grads regret their college major choice

59% of 4-year students complete within 6 years

Only 45% of students graduate from the first school they attend.

Sources: College Board Trends, Federal Reserve, TICAS, Bureau of Labor.



Championing the Non-Four-Year Degree

Four-Year Degree Realities:

- Not necessarily providing the skills needed for today's and tomorrow's economy.
- Return on investment must be evaluated.
- More than half are not completing these degrees.

Non-Four-Year Degree Realities:

- Skill development.
- High demand jobs.
- The median annual salary of all non-four-year degree programs is only \$11K less than bachelor's degree recipients, but see an average savings of \$114K over the cost of repaying a bachelor's degree for 10 years. (\$11,400/year)
- More job security because skills are needed and not easily exported.



Most Importantly

College access doesn't equal success.

Remind students and families that getting into college:

- Isn't the end.
- Isn't the goal.
- Is one step of the execution of a plan.

The end goal must be a fulfilling career that meets the student's interests and skills.



Education to Meet Market Needs

Should the 4-year degree still be king?

- Skills development
- Credentials needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow
- Increased investment in apprenticeships
- On-the-job training

All of these are post-high school education. Are there earlier solutions?

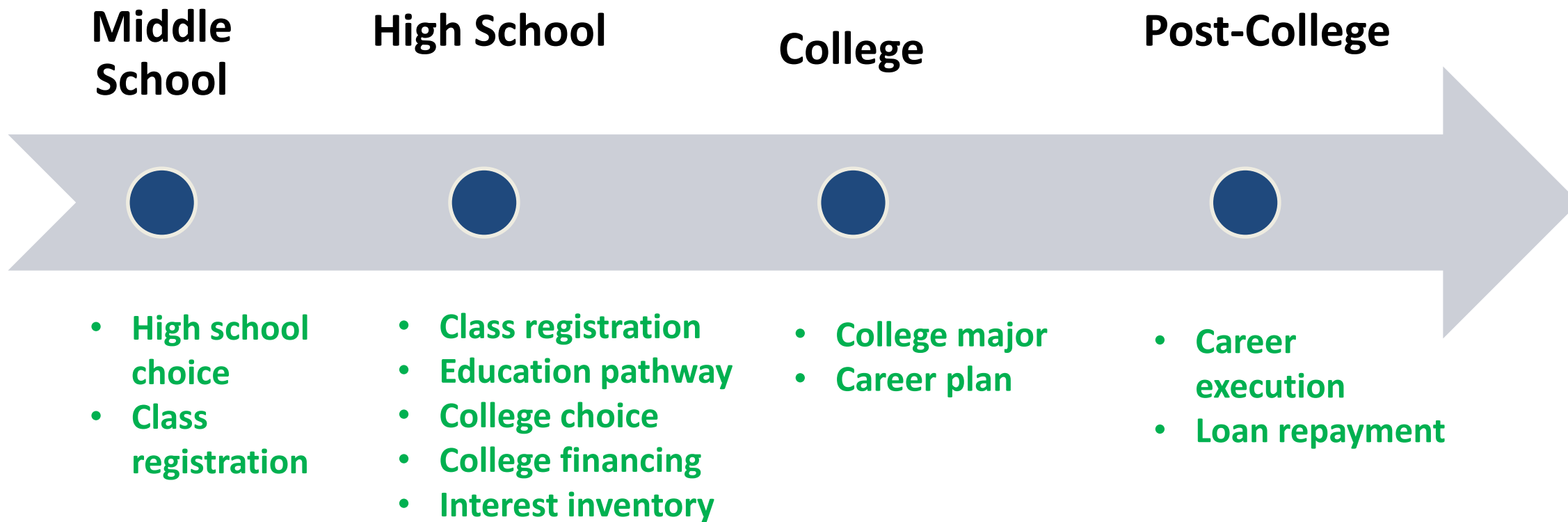


Education and Career Exploration As Early As Middle School

Why earlier awareness leads to better planning for higher education



Student Awareness Timeline





High School Is Too Late

Research shows **middle school** is the time when students can benefit the most from education and career exploration.

High school problems:

- Not enough time to plan.
- Too late to consider all options.
- Too late to prepare.
- No time for modifying plans.
- Late planning leads to debt burden.

**Middle school engaged at 80%.
High school engaged at 40%.**

Middle School Should Be New Target

Education and career conversations must begin as early as middle school to provide enough time for exploration and experimentation before high school is complete.

- Plant the seeds.
- Interest inventories.
- Skill development.
- Give kids the opportunities to explore while there is still time.
- Proper high school choice planning.
- Job shadowing, internships, and part-time jobs to match career interests and goals.
- Educated post-high school education planning.
- Give parents a chance to plan.



Perkins V

Previously: CTE funds could only be allocated to grade 7 and above.

Now: CTE funds can be allocated to the “middle grades” which is being defined as grade 5 through grade 8 in general. (States may vary.)

Middle School Outreach

Beginning in middle school:

- Encourage finding connections between academics, education interests, and career interests.
- Set good financial literacy foundation.
- Set goals for getting college and career information.
- Promote college AND career planning in middle school.
- Promote creative and interactive career exploration programs and activities.

Middle School Outreach

To be the most effective, college and career planning must begin in **middle school**.

Explore → **Experiment** → **Execute**

Middle School Outreach:

- Must be engaging.
- Must match their intellectual and social-emotional development.
- Learn through teamwork and real-life scenarios.
- Active, hands-on, and fun.
- Outside of the formal classroom.
- Consistency
- Must be quick.



Operation Exploration Pilot

A promising education and career exploration program designed for middle school students.



Operation Exploration Program

- Grades 7 to 10 (majority 8 and 9).
- Monthly sessions January through August.
- Games and activities to foster engagement.
- **Local professionals** share their own experiences in choosing education & career pathways.
- **Goal** = Practical knowledge and actionable steps to make informed decisions for college & career.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF BOSTON
CHARLESTOWN CLUB**

Emphasis:

- Jobs of tomorrow
- Exploring interests
- Experimenting



Operation Exploration Program

- **92%** reported planning to go pursue education beyond high school after the program (12% increase).
- **53%** were confident in ability to evaluate their best post-high school education option.
- **92%** were more motivated to research the best post-high school option for them.
- **88%** were more motivated to plan for life after high school.
- **82%** felt they could effectively manage their finances.
- **68%** felt they knew how to achieve their financial goals.



Example Activity





Resources

ASA School Counselor Survey

<https://d9jmqzwnxk1s1.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/14141839/School-Counselors-and-College-Financial-Fit.pdf>

ASA Life Delayed Survey

www.asa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/life_delayed_whitepaper_2015-1.pdf

BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>



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617.535.2053