

# CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Fueling Engagement of Today's High School Students

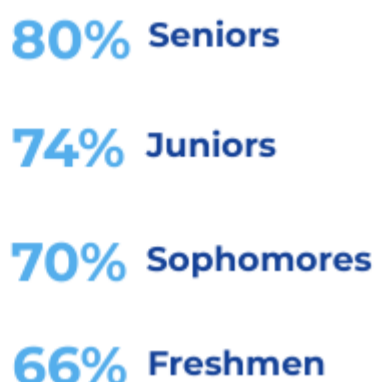
## What do you want to be when you grow up?

It is a question that high school students hear often...but whether others are asking or not, most students are already thinking about **possible career pathways.**



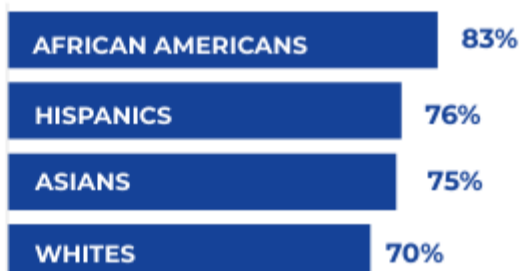
### Future Careers are on Students' Minds

Majorities of high school students are thinking **Very Much** or **Quite a Bit** about their future careers.\*



\*Question: How much thought have you given to your future career?

No Matter Their Race or Ethnicity



No Matter Their Gender

No Matter Their SES\*



\*Socioeconomic Status (SES) is based on the proportion of students in the school eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch

Good News, Teachers!  
You Can Leverage Interest in Careers to ...



Boost Academic Motivation and Engagement<sup>1</sup>



Encourage Self-Direction in Choosing Courses and Activities<sup>2</sup>



Give Students Focus in Cultivating Networks for Success<sup>3</sup>

Leveraging students' interest in future careers can help keep them engaged in class activities.

### Career Goals Give Students a Sense of Purpose

It is "**extremely difficult** to tell a teenager what his or her **purpose for learning** should be."<sup>4</sup>

**However**, when students realize their purpose on their own, they have...

- more **motivation**<sup>5</sup>
- greater **stability** in their lives<sup>6</sup>
- better **youth development** outcomes<sup>7</sup>



Encouraging students to focus on their career aspirations empowers them to connect today's academics and activities with tomorrow's success.

### Keep Encouraging Your Students to Consider Future Pathways!!

Let the Student Research Foundation (SRF) help you keep students thinking about their future careers!



#### The SRF Survey:

- encourages students to consider their futures
- helps students set goals and identify interests
- reminds students your class affects their future



SRF connects students with educational resources tailored to their needs, interests, and goals.



SRF's FREE tools encourage students to plan for their future and empower them with resources to achieve their dreams.



Get started by contacting us:  
[info@StudentResearchFoundation.org](mailto:info@StudentResearchFoundation.org)



Or learn more on our website:  
[www.StudentResearchFoundation.org](http://www.StudentResearchFoundation.org)

#### Sources

- <sup>1</sup> Kay, Joseph S et al. "High-school predictors of university achievement: Youths' self-reported relationships with parents, beliefs about success, and university aspirations." *Journal of Adolescence* vol. 53 (2016): 95-106. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.08.014.
- <sup>2</sup> Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2020). Motivation and social cognitive theory. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 60, Article 101832. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2019.101832>.
- <sup>3</sup> "State Board Recognizes Importance of Career Planning." *Career Vision*, 13 Apr. 2018. [careervision.org/state-board-recognizes-importance-career-planning/](http://careervision.org/state-board-recognizes-importance-career-planning/).
- <sup>4</sup> Merrill, Stephen. "8 Ways to Bolster Executive Function in Teens and Tweens." *George Lucas Educational Foundation & Edutopia*, March 12, 2021. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/8-ways-bolster-executive-function-teens-and-tweens>.
- <sup>5</sup> Machell, K.A., Disabato, D.J. & Kashdan, T.B. Buffering the Negative Impact of Poverty on Youth: The Power of Purpose in Life. *Soc Indic Res* 126, 845–861 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-015-0917-6>.
- <sup>6</sup> Burrow, A. L., Hill, P. L., Ratner, K., & Sumner, R. (2018). A better tomorrow: Toward a stronger science of youth purpose. *Research in Human Development*, 15(2), 167–180.
- <sup>7</sup> Burrow, A. L., O'Dell, A. C., & Hill, P. L. (2010). Profiles of a developmental asset: Youth purpose as a context for hope and well-being. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(11), 1265–1273.

This infographic summarizes findings from the Career Pathways and 21st Century Skills Survey sponsored by the Research Consortium on Career Pathways and 21st Century Skills. Administered nationwide by SRF in Fall 2019, the analysis is based on responses of 47,899 students in high school classrooms across the nation. To learn more visit [www.StudentResearchFoundation.org](http://www.StudentResearchFoundation.org).