

## Defining What It Means to Be

# Really Ready

## Preparing Students for College, Work, and Life

The world of work is quickly redefining what it means to be ready, including a broader set of aims that reflect fast-paced, complex, and diverse workplaces.

### COLLEGE

By 2020  
**65%**

of jobs will require a college education, yet only about **15% of Hispanics and 22% of African Americans** will achieve a four-year degree or higher.<sup>1</sup>

Students will need more knowledge and skills, and be able to communicate to project teams both online and in person.

### WORK

**4 in 10**

of today's students will be freelancers, often holding more than one job at once.<sup>2</sup>

Students will need to be critical thinkers, self-directed workers, and able to solve complex problems.

### LIFE

**58%**

of 291 hiring managers surveyed say the lack of soft skills among candidates **"is limiting their company's productivity."**<sup>3</sup>

Students will need to be good teammates and leaders. They'll also need to be kind, empathetic, and responsible.

Grad Nation<sup>4</sup> and Digital Promise<sup>5</sup> both report that state-by-state graduation rates for students in the above groups are considerably lower than for students in other groups. For example:

## An Increasingly DIVERSE Student Population

16 states graduate **less than 70% of low-income students**

35 states graduate **less than 70% of English Language Learners**

33 states graduate **less than 70% of students with special needs**

**Low-income students, minorities, ELL students, and students with special needs are still not graduating from high school at the same rate as their peers, nor are they persisting once they enroll in a 2- or 4-year college program.**<sup>6</sup>

Even before entering high school, many students feel that school doesn't meet their individual academic needs. These students often acquire more encouragement, support, and learning experiences to help give them the confidence and skills to persist through middle school, into high school, and then into college or the workforce.

## #ReallyReady Skills

If we equip all students with the following *Really Ready* skills, there is a greater chance they will leave middle school feeling prepared for the next step, and later graduate from high school confident that they can find success in college, work, and life.

### Critical Thinking\*

Apply tools and techniques gleaned from core subjects to formulate and solve problems.

### Self-Directed Learning

Monitor and direct self learning; complete projects and tasks independently.

### Growth Mindset\*\*

Recognize that both basic and advanced abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work.

### Communication

Clearly organize data, findings, and thoughts in both written and oral communication.

### Social and Emotional Skills\*\*\*

Understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

*"By understanding how people learn to support the growing diversity of students we can indeed make it personal."*

—Digital Promise Report: *Making Learning Personal for All: The Growing Diversity in Today's Classrooms*

\*Critical thinking, communication, and self-direction are skills adapted from *Deeper Learning for Every Student Every Day*

\*\*Growth mindset is based off the work of Carol Dweck

\*\*\*Social and emotional skills definition is from CASEL

## Using Digital Curriculum to Prepare *All Students*

The use of digital curriculum can be a catalyst to make more learning happen. Students spend less time on tasks that aren't relevant to their readiness for college or work, and spend more time learning content and skills that will help them be *Really Ready*. Examples include:



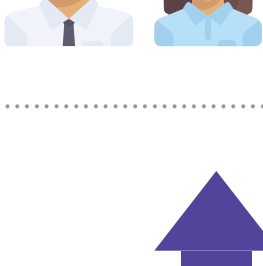
### Critical Thinking

A student who is excelling may be ready to move on to more difficult problems and would benefit from flexible pacing and course options, while a student who struggles with critical thinking may need more positive reinforcement, guidance, or time, but still deserves a chance to work on novel and complex problems.



### Communication

An ELL student may need more support and scaffolds when working on communication competencies. Individualized online support and tutorials help build confidence with oral, written, and spoken communication skills.



### Growth Mindset

A student who is struggling may not actually believe that he or she is capable of achieving the goals and tasks presented, and may need rigorous grade-level-appropriate lessons with active learning, engaging resources, career and technical education options, support, and motivation to help him or her persist.

## Digital Curriculum Gets Students Ready

- ★ Interests and Engagement
- ★ Voice and Choice
- ★ Feedback and Support
- ★ Flexible Pacing
- ★ Real-Time Assessment
- ★ Options and Pathways
- ★ Motivation
- ★ Language Translation

## Paving the Path

Engaging and rigorous digital content is key to ensuring that students are working on *Really Ready* skills.

All students need to have learning experiences that prepare them for college, work, and life environments.

For more, visit the [Apex Learning Really Ready campaign page](#) and read the forthcoming white paper.



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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/28/5-facts-about-latinos-and-education/ft\\_16-07-26\\_Latinoseducation\\_collegecompletion/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/28/5-facts-about-latinos-and-education/ft_16-07-26_Latinoseducation_collegecompletion/)

<sup>2</sup> <http://gettingsmart.com/2016/08/its-a-project-based-world-lets-prepare-students-for-it/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://blog.linkedin.com/2016/08/29/soft-skills-crucial-to-landing-your-dream-job>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gradnation.org/report/2015-building-grad-nation-report>

<sup>5</sup> [http://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/lps-growing\\_diversity\\_FINAL-1.pdf?utm\\_source=DP+Master+List&utm\\_campaign=363a413481-Action+Report+9%2F8%2F16&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1a73515842-363a413481-348728557](http://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/lps-growing_diversity_FINAL-1.pdf?utm_source=DP+Master+List&utm_campaign=363a413481-Action+Report+9%2F8%2F16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a73515842-363a413481-348728557)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.gradnation.org/sites/default/files/18006\\_CE\\_BGN\\_FuLLvFNL.pdf?\\_ga=1.146514487.2027790852.1476804693](http://www.gradnation.org/sites/default/files/18006_CE_BGN_FuLLvFNL.pdf?_ga=1.146514487.2027790852.1476804693)