21st Century Skills Through Micro-Credentialing: The Polk County Partnership

February 17th, 2023
Welcome!

Adam Lindberg
Director of Research and Policy
Florida College Access Network

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Questions & Conversation

• Submit your questions in the box

• Share on social media
  Twitter: @FLCollegeAccess
  #FCAN
  #TalentStrongFL

This webinar is being recorded; all materials will be available within a week of recording.
Our mission:
We lead the collaborative movement to ensure every Floridian achieves an education beyond high school and a rewarding career.

Our vision:
A Florida working together, where education is the pathway to economic mobility for all.
FCAN’s Work

Research and Data FCAN publishes research and data on evidence-based practices and policy opportunities to strengthen Florida’s talent pool.

Local college access networks (LCANs) LCANs support 82% of the state’s population. These organizations are made up of community leaders who come together to create solutions and partnerships to support local talent development.

Statewide Initiatives FCAN coordinates 4 College Ready Florida initiatives that provides schools and community organizations resources to help students continue their education after high school.
7 Conditions for Success

**Opportunity for everyone:** To build a talent-strong economy, all Floridians need access to a postsecondary education and the supports to complete it.

**Clear information and guidance:** Students and families need exposure and counseling early and often to make informed decisions about their futures.

**Affordability:** Postsecondary education needs to be within everyone’s financial reach, regardless of household income or life circumstances.

**Multiple pathways to success:** Floridians benefit from multiple learning opportunities for academic achievement and career advancement.

**Lifelong learning:** No degree or credential is “one and done;” Floridians need to prepare for career changes through continuous learning.

**Effective use of data:** Transparent access to data on education and economic outcomes, especially for Florida’s diverse populations, helps achieve our goals.

**Community collaboration:** When community partners work together toward a shared vision, they remove barriers, build a robust workforce, and improve the quality of life for their regions.
Today’s Presenters

Dr. Naomi Boyer
Executive Director, Digital Transformation
Education Design Lab

Matthew Aranda
Associate Education Designer, Micro-Credentialing
Education Design Lab

Steve Cochran
Senior Director, Workforce Education and Multiple Pathways
Polk County Schools

Kim Long
Executive Director
Polk Vision

Kandis Buford
Equity and Human Resource Director
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
21st Century Skills Through Micro-Credentialing: The Polk County Partnership

February 2023
Panelists

Feel free to ask the panelists questions at any time!

Naomi Boyer  
*Education Design Lab*  
Executive Director, Digital Transformation

Matthew Aranda  
*Education Design Lab*  
Associate Education Designer

Steve Cochran  
*Polk County Public Schools*  
Senior Director, Workforce Education and Multiple Pathways

Kim Long  
*Polk Vision*  
Executive Director

Kandis Buford  
*Polk County Board of County Commissioners*  
Equity and Human Resource Director
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam Lindberg &amp; Naomi Boyer</td>
<td>Welcome + Overview + Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Aranda</td>
<td>Propel Polk! Foundational Info About the Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Cochran</td>
<td>Implementing 21st Century Skill Digital Micro-credentials in Polk County Public Schools</td>
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<td>Kim Long</td>
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<td>The Needs of Polk County Board of County Commissioners</td>
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<td>Naomi Boyer</td>
<td>Panel Q&amp;A</td>
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Education Design Lab 21st Century Skills Micro-credentials + Propel Polk project
We co-design, test, and build new models and approaches to better address program affordability, relevance, portability, and visibility in a rapidly changing knowledge economy.

140 Colleges + Universities
Majority of them serve New Majority Learners

100 Employers

12 Ecosystems
States, systems, cities
Designing Postsecondary Education with Learners

Who are the learners we primarily work with?

- Frontline Workers
- Transfer Students
- Single Parents
- Non-degreed Adults
- First-generation Students
- Underinvested Communities
Catalyze Challenge: A Consortium of Partners

SPONSORING PARTNERS

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

AFFILIATE PARTNERS
Propel Polk! Goals

1. Deliver 21st century skill micro-credentials to 450 Junior and Senior HS students

2. Engage Polk County employers in identification of the highest priority needed 21st century and technical skills

3. Engage Polk County employers in a campaign to educate + hire badge-earners

4. Expand use of micro-credentials to secure jobs and post-secondary learning.
21st century skills, defined

- Employability skills
- Durable skills
- Power skills
- Soft skills
- Essential skills
- Human skills
Micro-credentials and Digital Badges

**Digital micro-credential:** A narrowly focused learning and/or assessment experience, done online, typically in under a year, which verifies that a specific set of competencies have been achieved.

**Digital badge:** the physical asset learners earn upon successfully completing a micro-credential, which includes the below features:

- Recognition of Achievement
- Links to Competencies
- Contains Meta Data
- Open Standards
- Shareable
- Verifiable
- Stackable
- Discoverable
Critical Thinking - Polk County Public Schools

Issued by Polk County Public Schools.

Critical thinking in the 21st century includes the capacity to reason logically and rigorously. Effective critical thinkers exhibit four core sub-competencies: gather and assess relevant information; identify patterns; question assumptions; and draw well-reasoned conclusions.

Learn more

Ways to Use a Digital Badge

- Find jobs that seek the validated skill
- Share on LinkedIn
- Share on social media
- Hyperlink on resumes
- Embed + link image in email signatures
- Discuss gained skills during interviews
Polk County Public Schools.

The mission of Polk County Public Schools is to provide a high-quality education for all students. 21st century skills are essential for young people entering the workforce. Key skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving are in high demand by employers. The awarding of digital micro-credentials as “badges” will allow students to make the achievement of these skills visible to both colleges and employers.
21st Century Skill Micro-credentials

**Critical Thinking**
Education Design Lab
Issued by Polk County Public Schools

**Initiative**
Education Design Lab
Issued by Polk County Public Schools

**Oral Communication**
Education Design Lab
Issued by Polk County Public Schools
Education Design Lab
21st Century Skill Learning Philosophy

- Module Overview
- Learn
- Practice + Contribute
- Assess
- Reflect

CRITICAL THINKING
Education Design Lab

Learn
Estimated Time: 45 mins

Practice + Contribute
Estimated Time: 1 hour

Assess
Estimated Time: 1 hour

Reflect
Estimated Time: 15 mins

Sub-Competency Mastery
Project Progress so far

- **32 employers completed skills profiles for their organizations**
  - Fall '21 / Spring '22

- **AVID implementation**
  - Summer '22

- **Interest from BoCC to interview badge-earning students for their job roles**
  - Summer '22

- **Career and Technical Education implementation**
  - Spring '23

- **SNHU to offer Polk students 6 credits (two courses) for combination of micro-credential completion**
  - Spring '22

- **SNHU to offer Polk students 6 credits (two courses) for combination of micro-credential completion**
  - Summer '22

- **Employer Awareness of badged students**
  - Summer '23

End August 2023
Description of T-Profile

The T-Profile is a **visual construct** representing the optimal combination of 21st century and technical skills for a specified job.

→ Allows employers to be honest and precise about the **ideal combination of skills** for their specific job roles

→ Institutions can understand what employers need for specific job roles and **prepare their learners** with targeted, in-demand skills
Implementing 21st Century Skill Micro-credentials in Polk County Public Schools
What are Micro-credentials?

Micro-credentials are an assessment-based record of focused learning achievement verifying what the learner knows, understands, or can do. Being delivered as “bite-sized” chunks, they have stand-alone value and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials.

The digital badges awarded to students:

- Recognize mastery of job skills, such as critical thinking and oral communication
- Include specific information about how, when, and where they were awarded
- Can be linked in resumes and professional profiles, as well as discussed in job interviews
Micro-credential Student Learner Data

2021 - 2022 AVID Model

- 10 Teachers: AVID programs through the district.
- 10 students completed Critical Thinking micro-credential and earned a badge.
- AVID’s new curriculum has add micro-credentials through the program which students can earn.
- AVID only reaches a small portion of students within a school, therefore, we sought to find another way to reach more students.

2022 - 2023 CTE Model

- 9 Teachers: Bartow, Fort-Meade and Kathleen High.
- Currently 147 Students enrolled in Critical Thinking, Initiative, and Oral Communication.
- 25 students completed Critical Thinking micro-credential and earned a badge so far.
- Students will continue working until the end of the school year to complete the other two micro-credentials.
- The goal is for 50 students to earn at least two micro-credentials by May 31st, 2023.
21st Century Skill Micro-credentials

Critical thinking in the 21st Century includes the capacity to reason logically and rigorously.

Initiative in the 21st Century includes self-efficacy and the capacity to identify needs and respond proactively.

Oral communication in the 21st Century includes the capacity to speak with clarity and precision and understand and recognize nonverbal cues.
How do micro-credentials support district and workforce education strategic goals?

- Micro-credentials provide our students with alternate ways to earn certification for skills used at the postsecondary level or in the workforce.

- Workforce Education’s goal is to increase student retention in our valuable programs.

- Micro-Credentials prepare students to meet industry needs in Polk County’s increasingly complex, ever-growing 21st Century workforce.

- Micro-credentials promote collaboration across the district to equitably leverage the opportunities available to students in the fastest-growing county in Florida.
Current School / Academy Programs

Bartow High School

- Academy of Future Educators
- Digital Design and Media

7 Completers

CTE Head of School: Kerry Brown

Fort Meade Middle / High School

- Construction Academy
- Culinary Arts
- Digital Design and Media

3 Completers

CTE Head of School: Summer Fisher

Kathleen High School

- Culinary Arts
- Digital Design and Media
- Entrepreneurship

16 Completers

CTE Head of School: Ladreda Akins
## Benefits of Micro-credentials

### Learners
- Learners can develop a specific skill and articulate their knowledge in post-secondary institutions and the workforce.

### Business Partners
- Build a pipeline of qualified students ready for employment.
- Meet emerging industry needs of local businesses.

### Polk County Public Schools
- Micro-credentials serve the needs of preparing learners for college and career goals upon graduating from high school.
- Direct engagement with local businesses and employers to increase relevant partnerships with the Polk County Public Schools.
Recommendations for Program Growth

- Offer micro-credentials through all “On the Job Training” (OJT) classes
- Students seeking internships to complete professionalism and ready-to-work credentials
- Traviss and Ridge Technical Colleges to assist new graduates with employability skills to enter in the workforce
Responding to the Local Needs
What is Polk Vision?

OUR LEADing WORK

As facilitators of a countywide collaboration among schools, non-profits, businesses, and the public sector, Polk Vision offers a framework for achieving sustained improvement. The work is dynamic and requires continuous learning and adaptive solutions in addressing a range of complex issues.

Polk Vision refers to this as our LEADS process:

- **Learn** all we can about a problem facing our community;
- **Engage** partners knowledgeable and passionate about the issue;
- **Align** resources to reduce the impact of the problem;
- **Develop** plans that will result in long-term systemic solutions;
In order to achieve the overarching priority of improved community prosperity before 2030, Polk County will have:

**EDUCATION**
A world-class, fully integrated education system that supports the needs of a vibrant, progressive community.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
An economic development environment that attracts quality businesses with higher paying jobs, improves productivity and retains educated young people.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**
Growth management and infrastructure that protects the environment, enhances quality of life, supports education and economic development and is economically sustainable.

**GOVERNMENT**
A comprehensive system of government that is effective, efficient, diverse and responsive to the basic needs of its citizens.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**
A quality of life that encourages diverse backgrounds to live in harmony while developing physically, spiritually, mentally and culturally within a healthy and safe environment.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**
Private sector leadership that drives the partnership with government and citizens to ensure that Polk County is a premiere place to live, learn, work and play.
IMPROVE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH

IMPROVE COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE SAFETY
Talent Pipeline Team - Aligning Industry with Education

Convened in partnership with the Central Florida Development Council is focused on filling the skills gap to meet current and emerging industry workforce needs.
In June of 2019, Polk Vision together with Polk County Career Academies hosted a professional development training for Polk County Public Schools’ Middle School Counselors at the Bartow History Center.

Local College Access Network - Aligning Career Pathways

Beyond the traditional FAFSA completion support to high school students expanding career exploration with middle school students.
Local business leaders were asked to identify and rank the jobs and skills needed in their workplace. Employability (Soft) Skills ranked #1 most needed and #1 deficit in applicants and recent hires.
### Overlapping Results with PoG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Percent of Responses</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>2,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>1,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self/Goal-Directed</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CRITICAL THINKING**
- Education Design Lab
  - issued by Polk County Public Schools

**INITIATIVE**
- Education Design Lab
  - issued by Polk County Public Schools

**ORAL COMMUNICATION**
- Education Design Lab
  - issued by Polk County Public Schools
Find Your Future Workforce - Industry Roundtables

NEW essential soft skills solution now getting Florida ready to work!

Answering Florida Employers' Demands

92% of Florida employers plan to hire, yet 81% say lack of key employability
Polk County Public Schools - Portrait of a Graduate
Polk Vision promotes opportunities with Education Design Lab for business leaders and HR professionals to partake in the T-Profile Sessions.

**Propel Polk!**

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### Education Design Lab | T-Profile

**Occupation/Job Role:** Teams Coordinator  
**Employer/Organization:** Polk Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Creative Problem Solving</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Intercultural Fluency</th>
<th>Competency: Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lead without risk - 2</td>
<td>identify patterns - 2</td>
<td>focus on solutions - 2</td>
<td>curiosity - 2</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>act as catalyst - 3</td>
<td>manage ambiguity - 3</td>
<td>listen actively - 3</td>
<td>challenge biases - 3</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-awareness - 4</td>
<td>iteration - 4</td>
<td>diverse perspectives - 4</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>learn from experience - 5</td>
<td>divergent thinking - 5</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resilience</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Oral Communications</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>Competency: Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>exhibit flexibility - 1</td>
<td>identify patterns - 1</td>
<td>listen actively - 2</td>
<td>recognize needs - 2</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus on solutions - 2</td>
<td>draw conclusions - 2</td>
<td>clarify/prove - 1</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-awareness - 3</td>
<td>question assumptions - 3</td>
<td>adopt new choices - 3</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learn from experience - 4</td>
<td>gather/review info - 4</td>
<td>validate others' feelings - 4</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
<td>TBD - TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Technical Skills

- What are the things/bits/activities the employee needs to be able to do on the job? What evidence will you need from potential employees?
- Are these certifications or licenses required or preferred for hire? (Yes, please specify below) (Include limited whether it is required or preferred)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to schedule and run Zoom meetings</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use Google Calendar and Gmail</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Resources


• Florida Chamber Foundation - Identifies employability skills as a barrier to economic growth
  https://www.flchamber.com/research/research-programs/employability-skills-framework/

• Florida Ready to Work begins offering credentialing in employability skills -
  https://www.floridareadytowork.com/employability-skills

• Portrait of a Graduate Results -
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GPCnJUaZVtDsOkofvzcl_hCRf9ESph6I/view?usp=sharing
Connecting to Employers
Propel Polk
The Needs of Polk County Board of County Commissioners

Kandis Baker-Buford, JD, CPM
Equity and Human Resources Director
The Needs of Polk County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC)

Current Situation
- Tight Labor Market
  - COVID Exodus of Employees
  - Baby Boomers Exiting the Workforce
  - Finding qualified candidates who fit company culture

New Recruitment Opportunities
- Non-Traditional Recruitment
- Propel Polk
- Home Grown Employees
Sample Career Opportunity
Polk County BoCC

**Occupational / Job Role**
Trades Helper

**Employer / Organization**
Polk County BoCC – Utilities Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Creative Problem Solving</th>
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<th>Intercultural Fluency</th>
<th>Self-directed Learning</th>
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<td>self awareness - 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>iteration -</td>
<td>convergent / divergent thinking -</td>
<td>diverse perspective - 4</td>
<td>strengthen relationships - 3</td>
<td>initiate on learning</td>
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<td>commit to learning</td>
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<td>reflect on learning</td>
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Sample Career Opportunity
Polk County BoCC (continued)

**Occupational / Job Role**
Trades Helper

**Employer / Organization**
Polk County BoCC – Utilities Division

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<tr>
<td>self-awareness -</td>
<td>learn from experience -</td>
<td>storytelling - 3</td>
<td>adopt tone / word choice - 4</td>
<td>TBD -</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to listen and follow written and oral instructions. - 1</td>
<td>N/A -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other training will be taught. -</td>
<td>-</td>
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Q & A
Conclusion