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SCRI/Career Jam Student Survey of CapNY 8th and 9th Graders Reveals Regional Challenge to Better Align Future Workforce Skills, Traits, and Interests with Careers in Demand

Career Jam™ Explore to Surpass Providing over 3,000 Regional Students Career Awareness and Exploration Activities in 2022 with its Live Exploration Event at HVCC on Oct. 13

ALBANY, NEW YORK – A new [Career Jam™](#) and Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) survey of 1,525 local students identified that among top career sectors matching students' interests, skills, and personal traits, manufacturing was number one. STEM careers were a top student interest and remained in the top five career clusters when aligned with skills and personal traits. The survey also revealed that a quarter of Capital Region eighth and ninth graders surveyed have yet to take any career preparedness steps. Those averaging C grades or lower have undertaken far fewer career awareness and exploration activities than their academically higher-performing peers.

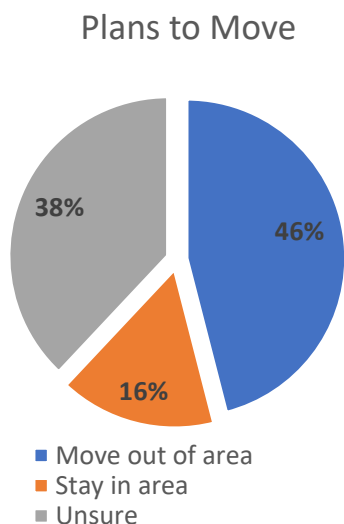
The SCRI/[Career Jam™](#) survey – the first of an annual index– establishes a local baseline for educators to measure and verify how far along students are in career preparedness and development as they begin high school course selections. It was commissioned by Career Jam™, with support from the organization's annual community impact partner, Siemens, and a collaborative CapNY workforce network. The survey findings reveal challenges and opportunities to students, parents, educators, local employers, and area trades professionals to better align students with career skills in-demand. The data was gathered anonymously as part of the spring 2022 Career Jam Explore combined virtual and LIVE Program capped by 1,800 students accessing hands-on skills activities at Siena College.

Career Jam is holding its next live exploration experience Oct. 13 with host partner, Hudson Valley Community College. The event provides an opportunity for dozens of local businesses, skilled trades, and educational partners to highlight career skills to students through hands-on demonstrations. It also promotes available career pathways through CTE, certification, higher education degree, and apprenticeship. Approximately 1,200 local students from seven schools are participating.

A Regional Solution

“Our approach is to help align local stakeholders to strengthen their ed-to-workforce ecosystem,” **said Bill Teator, Career Jam™ Co-Founder and Director of Strategic Partnerships.** “Helping to retain the next generation of workforce talent is essential to economic development and household prosperity. While others routinely measure the workforce hiring challenges and labor participation, this data plays a crucial role in educators, employers, and policymakers having measurable understanding of how the region's students' interests, skills, and educational pathways relate to skills needed in this region. This alignment

informs better decision-making and planning benefiting individual and family access to careers, and businesses and communities having workforce talent to compete.”



“One eye-opening statistic from this survey is that forty-six percent of students planned to move away after graduating and thirty-eight percent were unsure whether they’d stay or go. The Capital Region is rich with career opportunities in industries that match students’ interests, skills, and traits. But many students just don’t realize how there are so many local jobs that fit their interests, and if they did then I’m sure many more would see the Capital Region in their future. Career Jam is not only helping students see that, but also showing local employers how to make inroads to this young talent,” **said Mark Eagan, president and CEO of the Center for Economic Growth and Capital Region Chamber.**

SURVEY

Last June, 1,525 eighth and ninth graders from 21 Capital Region school districts participated in the first of what will become an annual Career Jam™ Explore survey. Among those students, 950 opted into a deeper career interest survey. Among insights, students revealed future intentions:

Post-graduation Plans	Want to do
Go to a four-year college	68%
Go to a two-year college	29%
Go directly to the workforce	12%
Serve in the military	13%
Work in an apprenticeship	10%
Take a certificate program	6%
Take a gap year	16%

“Career Jam is a potential game changer,” **said Dr. Don Levy, Director, Siena College Research Institute.** “Business leaders have told us in surveys for more than a decade that they need more employment-ready candidates to fill open and exciting positions. Career Jam will address those needs by exposing students to opportunities that match their skills and aspirations and by simultaneously arming educators with the data they can use to support burgeoning career readiness among their students. We’re thrilled to play a part in this win-win initiative.”

CAREER PREPAREDNESS

Key career preparedness findings include:

- 37% had engaged in no career awareness activities, such as completing career surveys and attending career awareness lessons or career fairs.
 - 55% for students averaging a C or Lower.
- 40% had engaged in no career exploration activities, such as career-related projects in class, industry research and community service.
 - 56% for students averaging a C or Lower.
- 25% of students had taken no career preparedness steps (awareness and exploration activities combined)
 - 55% of students had participated in two more career preparedness activities.
- 66% of students reported their parents/guardians have the greatest influence on future plans.
 - Friends were the second greatest influence at 13%.

[Click to access Career Jam/SCRI survey results, executive summary, and visual infographics.](#)

“Hudson Valley Community College is proud to host Career Jam’s live exploration experience on campus today. Early exposure to potential career pathways, applied learning options, and engagement activities have such a profound impact on personal, academic and career outcomes for students. At Hudson Valley we are proud to partner with Career Jam to help young students discover or confirm their career interests and find new on-ramps to future employment in our region,” **said Roger A. Ramsammy, Ph.D., President of Hudson Valley Community College.**

“This data is invaluable and reinforces the need for more household conversations at an earlier age,” **said Shelette R. Pleat, Principal for CTE, Capital Region BOCES.** “There are so many rewarding careers right here in our own backyard that our scholars have access to. Our programs lead directly into local careers which is more reason that we want to reach parents and households to promote economic opportunity.”

While students expressed the most interest in careers in Arts, Audio/Visual Technology and Communications (28 percent), and STEM fields (26 percent), the survey identified a mismatch when students’ personal interests, skills, and traits were combined and indexed. For example, students reported they strongly like caring about people (70 percent) and putting things together (70 percent). When indexed to their interests, manufacturing and human services emerged as top career cluster matches. Only 11 percent and 14 percent of students initially expressed an interest in careers in those industries.

“Finding ways to connect students to careers that can sustain a rewarding lifestyle is a strong focus of our team and an urgent need,” **said David Turner, Regional Manager Energy and Sustainability, Siemens Industry.** “As part of our Business to Society mission, Career Jam helps us foster a collaborative ed-to-career ecosystem by highlighting to students, educators, and community leaders the essential skills needed to address critical needs in advanced manufacturing, smart infrastructure, energy, and other sectors. There’s no time to waste.”

“These are the type of empirical and informative insights that show policy-makers the dovetailing of educational standards to workforce development, building more career connections to the in-demand skills that businesses need,” **said Brian Williams, Executive Director of the Capital Region Workforce Development Board.** In addition to his organization, efforts to drive more career awareness and connections with Career Jam™ are also supported by a CapNY region workforce development collaborative comprised of; the **Center for Economic Growth (CEG), Capital Region Chamber, Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Capital Region BOCES, Questar III BOCES, the Workforce**

Development Institute (WDI), Capital Region STEM Hub, Junior Achievement of Northeastern New York, and the exclusive annual Community Impact Partner, Siemens Industry, Inc. Student Success sponsors include Regeneron, Global Foundries, Day Automation, Saratoga County, Plug Power, and the Workforce Development Institute.

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About Career Jam™

Career Jam™ partners with community stakeholders to empower students of all backgrounds and abilities to imagine a better future through local careers in-demand. By helping put “workforce development in action,” it supports its goals to; 1) retain area talent to meet diverse career skills needed, 2) build a sustainable ecosystem of students, employers, trades, and educators to assist development of workforce pipelines, and 3) measure reach and impact of career awareness and exploration activities in relation to industry career clusters.

About Siena College Research Institute

Founded in 1980, the Siena College Research Institute conducts regional, statewide, and national surveys on business, economic, political, voter, social, academic, and historical issues. The surveys include both expert and public opinion polls. The Siena College Research Institute is directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D.

About Capital Region Chamber/Center for Economic Growth

The Center for Economic Growth (CEG) is dedicated to driving economic growth in New York’s eight-county, 1.1-million-person Capital Region. As the nonprofit regional economic development organization, we do this by attracting investment and talent; growing manufacturing and workforce capabilities, leveraging industry clusters, and developing the entrepreneurial ecosystem. We serve as a catalyst and work with partners and stakeholders to prepare the region to compete and move high-impact strategies and projects forward. An affiliate of the Capital Region Chamber, CEG is supported by investors in business, government, education, and the nonprofit sectors who are committed to sustainable economic growth and shared prosperity.

The Capital Region Chamber and its Center for Economic Growth affiliate drive economic prosperity with one voice, one mission, as one region. The Chamber, with 2,700 member-business from throughout Albany, Saratoga, Schenectady, and Rensselaer counties, provides catalytic leadership, advocacy, and broad-based member services. The Center for Economic Growth is the 8-county regional economic development organization.