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A collage of five images set against a background of blue and white splatters. The top-left image shows a young man with glasses and a blue surgical mask, holding a pencil. The top-right image shows a man with a colorful patterned mask and blue gloves, holding a drink. The middle-left image shows a woman hugging a younger woman. The middle-right image shows a man in a light blue shirt leaning over a young girl. The bottom-left image shows a woman in a blue tank top looking thoughtful.

# A Lost Generation

How Educational Disruptions During the  
Pandemic Threaten to Widen the Skills Gap

*An Express Employment Professionals White Paper  
October 2021*

[ExpressPros.com](https://www.expresspros.com)

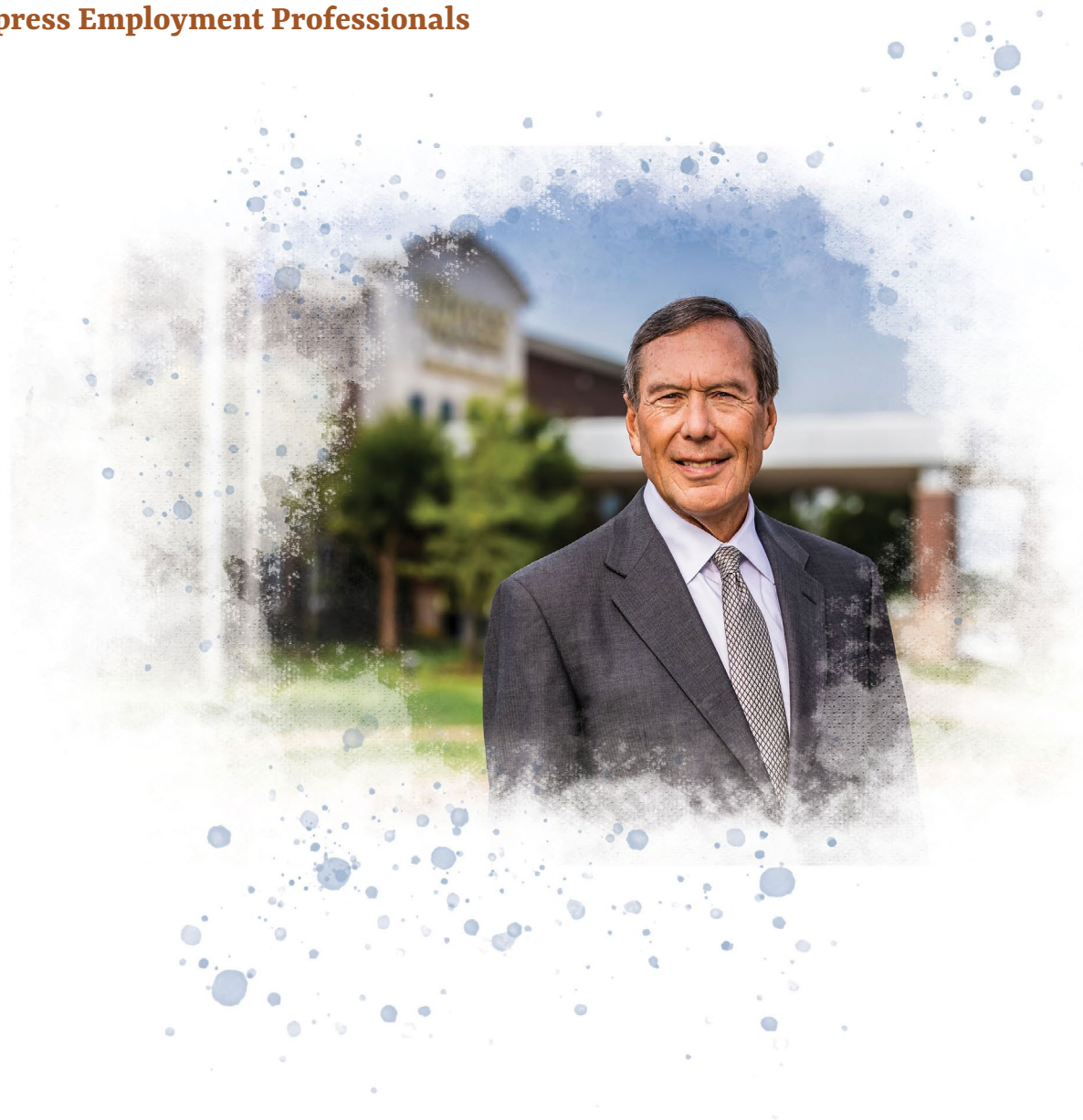




*“For years, Express has been sounding the alarm about the skills gap and the many ways it’s holding back the American economy. Now the pandemic has made it worse—likely for many years to come.*”

*“The disruptions to education will mean a whole generation or more is falling further behind. Getting back to the pre-pandemic status quo won’t be enough. And Americans are in general agreement: we’re witnessing the creation of a ‘lost generation.’”*

**– Bill Stoller,  
Chairman and CEO,  
Express Employment Professionals**





# A Lost Generation Of Future Workers

The COVID-19 pandemic closed K-12 schools, delayed vocational and college classes and led to more than a year of on-again-off-again remote learning. The disruptions that began in the 2019-2020 school year dragged on to the 2021-2022 school year in many places.

By July 2020, 99.4% of households with students in school reported that classes had been taught virtually or changed in some way.<sup>1</sup> Even in the fall of 2021, entire school districts were forced to shut down in-person classes due to outbreaks spread by the Delta variant.<sup>2</sup> And 15% of Americans know someone who dropped out of primary or secondary school.

Americans are growing alarmed about the consequences, with 81% of adults saying these disruptions pose long-or short-term challenges to student's performance at school or, later on, in the workplace.

- **80% say it will harm their ability to socialize with others**
- **79% say it is harming their mental health**
- **78% say it is hurting development of soft skills**
- **77% say it is hurting development of hard skills**

Some of the school closures were unavoidable, but that does not diminish the seriousness of the consequences. And despite widespread acknowledgement of these new struggles, only a slight majority (56%) believe the U.S. is taking the right steps to help students recover.

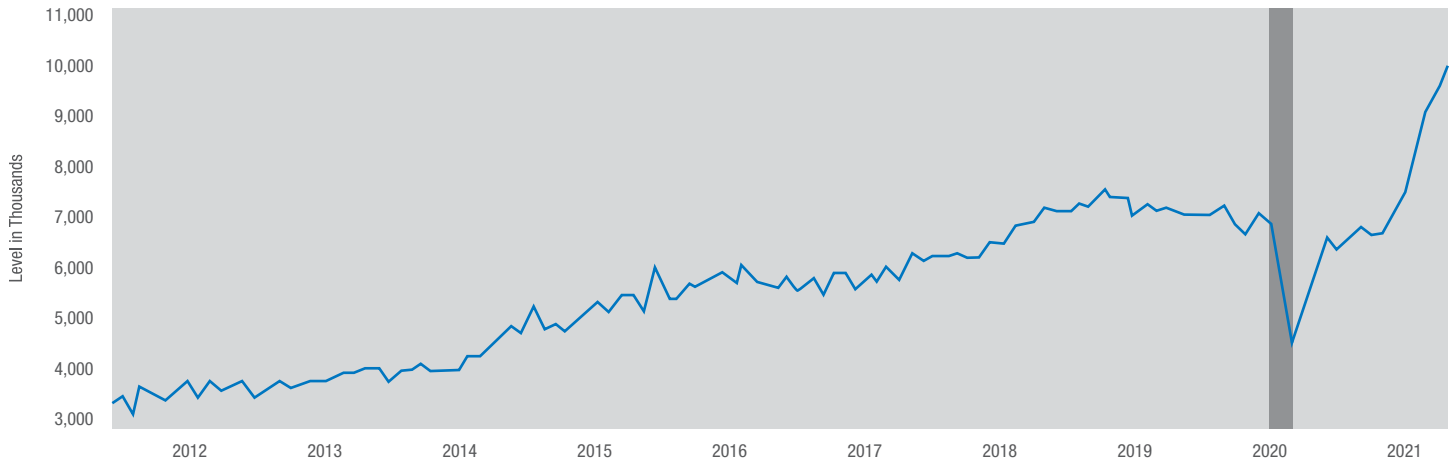
Before the pandemic, employers lamented the lack of qualified applicants for open jobs. In recent surveys, 40% had open positions they could not fill. Companies that have open positions most commonly say their open jobs are not filled due to a lack of applicants with hard skills (46%) and a lack of applicants with soft skills (39%).<sup>3</sup>

By summer 2021, employers were reporting a record-setting number of job openings, even as the unemployment rate remained elevated.<sup>4</sup> This skills gap will only get worse over time as young people who lost valuable chances to hone their skills make their way into the workforce.





## Total Nonfarm Job Openings: June 2011 - June 2021



Shaded areas indicate U.S. recessions.

Source: fred.stlouisfed.org, Bureau of Labor Statistics<sup>5</sup>

*"We are seeing the biggest shortages in entry-level work. This is across manufacturing, retail, restaurants and service businesses. We also see big shortages in skilled trades positions, especially ones that have been impacted significantly by the increased retirement of baby boomers that occurred over the last 18 months."*

**—Janis Petrini,  
Express franchise owner,  
Express Employment Professionals,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan**



**35% of Americans know someone who left the workforce entirely during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup>**



## Survey Details

The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals conducted a poll between July 29 and August 2, 2021, among 2,099 U.S. adults ages 18 and older, measuring public opinion on the pandemic's effect on education.<sup>8</sup>

The Harris Poll on behalf of Express conducted a poll of 1,001 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company) March 23 and April 12, 2021. Data was weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

**“The  
workforce  
is in  
trouble.”**

Against this backdrop, more than two-thirds (68%) of U.S. hiring decision-makers now agree the future workforce will have a “lost generation” due to school closures during the pandemic. And 71% of Americans agree that between the rapid retirement of the baby boomers and the emergence of a lost generation, “the workforce is in trouble.”<sup>7</sup>

This has more than just implications for individuals—or for employers in certain industries. The ripple effects of disrupted education are predicted to be a drag on economic growth for a generation—if lawmakers, employers and educators do not act swiftly to rethink and improve the education system, not just in the short-term but for the long haul.

*“While there remains an element of fear among workers as a result of COVID-19, it is not the only pitfall impacting the economy. Labor force issues and shortages seem to be getting worse, not better, showing our existing problems lie much deeper than the pandemic.”*

**—Michael Brady,  
Express franchise owner,  
Jacksonville West, Florida**



# Seas Of Unpreparedness: The K-12 Crisis

Nancy Reed, an Express franchise owner in south Texas, sees the writing on the wall. K-12 school closures “will create a gap of skills for students, mainly in English and math. If they don’t close that gap by graduation, it will affect the quality of hard skills in the workplace. It will even affect the vital soft skills necessary for all students and individuals to succeed.”

Preliminary studies back up Reed’s assertions. A July 2021 analysis from McKinsey found “the impact of the pandemic on K-12 student learning was significant, leaving students on average five months behind in mathematics and four months behind in reading by the end of the school year.”<sup>9</sup> High schoolers were more likely to drop out altogether.<sup>10</sup> And that did not yet account for disruptions in the 2021-2022 school year, which began with many Delta variant-fueled closures.

**15% of Americans know someone who dropped out of primary or secondary school.<sup>11</sup>**



## Some lessons can't go virtual.

There are some lessons that simply cannot be replicated even in the best virtual environments—specifically hands-on vocational training. “We have a close relationship with several high schools that have industrial education departments to train students in woodworking, CNC machines, CAD, and other areas of expertise. We’ve heard firsthand from educators on the challenges presented by virtual learning. Students are not able to get the hands-on lab time they need in these areas from only virtual learning,” explains Janis Petrini, Express franchise owner in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

## School closures create domino effects.

School closures also lead to domino effects that further strain the workforce. When children have to stay home, parents need to arrange childcare. If childcare is unavailable or unaffordable, parents have to stay home from work—or delay returning to work. This means even fewer people to fill available jobs.<sup>13</sup>

*“Students testing in 2021 were about ten points behind in math and nine points behind in reading, compared with matched students in previous years.”*

**—McKinsey study, July 2021<sup>12</sup>**



## Minority and disadvantaged students are hardest hit.

While the average student at the end of 2021 was five months behind in math and four in reading, according to McKinsey, “Students in majority Black schools ended the year with six months of unfinished learning, students in low-income schools with seven.”<sup>14</sup>

## Cumulative months of unfinished learning due to the pandemic by type of school, grades 1 through 6:

LEARNING GAP	BY RACE	BY INCOME	BY LOCATION
	Schools that are majority...	Household average, per school	School site
<b>Math</b> 5 months behind 	Black  6	>\$25K  6	City  5
	Hispanic  6	\$25K-\$75K  5	Suburb <sup>1</sup> 5
	White  4	>\$75K  4	Rural  4
<b>Reading</b> 4 months behind 	Black  6	>\$25K  6	City  4
	Hispanic  5	\$25K-\$75K  4	Suburb <sup>1</sup> 4
	White  3	>\$75K  3	Rural  3

<sup>1</sup>Town or suburb  
 Source: McKinsey study<sup>15</sup>

Census Bureau data from the end of the 2019-2020 school year found that online resources were more accessible to higher income households. “In households with incomes of \$100,000 or more, 85.8% of people with children reported using online resources for distance learning. By contrast, only 65.8% of people in households with incomes less than \$50,000 reported that children were using online resources. Conversely, low-income households reported higher rates of using paper materials sent home from school than high-income households do.”<sup>16</sup>

*“Over the next several years, we will have a better understanding of how effective the last 18 months of education have really been. Unfortunately, I fear many educational disparities will be amplified along income lines. As lower income areas and students had less access to resources, internet, equipment, and parental guidance, I think we will see a wider gap in educational performance by income level as a result of the pandemic.”*

**—Janis Petrini,**  
**Express franchise owner,**  
**Express Employment Professionals,**  
**Grand Rapids, Michigan**



## Disruption today means lost earnings tomorrow—and lost GDP.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has quantified the economy-level disruptions from lost learning through fall 2020—predicting a loss of future GDP that could total \$14.2 trillion.<sup>17</sup>

The OECD report explains that an additional year of schooling tends to increase a person's lifetime income by 7.5% to 10%, so a loss of just one-third of a year's worth of learning would cut a person's lifetime earnings by 3%.<sup>18</sup>

McKinsey paints a similar picture: “Our analysis suggests that, unless steps are taken to address unfinished learning, today's students may earn \$49,000 to \$61,000 less over their lifetime owing to the impact of the pandemic on their schooling. The impact on the U.S. economy could amount to \$128 billion to \$188 billion every year as this cohort enters the workforce.”<sup>19</sup>



## Future salary expectations may not be based on education—and change with the generation.

Employers should also understand their prospective employees' pay expectations—and how that interacts with the skills they bring (or don't bring) to the job.

Americans most commonly say the top attribute on which an employee's salary should be based is their performance on the job (40%), which is followed by the skills they bring to the job (23%). If those skills are lacking due to education deficiencies caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, wages and overall lifetime earnings could be negatively impacted.

Baby boomers/seniors are more likely than other generations to say an employee's salary should be based on their performance on the job (50% Boomers vs. 28%-38% other generations), while Gen Z is most likely to say it should be based on what the employee thinks is fair (11% Gen Z vs. 1%-7% other generations).<sup>20</sup>



When it comes to deciding an employee's pay, nearly two-thirds (64%) believe it is an employer's responsibility to decide what a fair salary is. Notably, this increases with age, with Gen Z the least likely to think this is the employer's responsibility.





## Percentage saying it is the employer's responsibility to determine a fair salary.<sup>21</sup>



## It's not just academics.

While 79% of American adults think school closures and disruptions are hurting student's mental health, the Express poll of Americans in summer 2021 also found that nearly half of adults (48%) also think these closures pose long-term challenges to younger Americans' mental health.<sup>22</sup>

In the McKinsey study, more than 35% of parents are very or extremely concerned about their children's mental health, and more parents are reporting increases in anxiety and depression, as well as social withdrawal and self-isolation.<sup>23</sup>

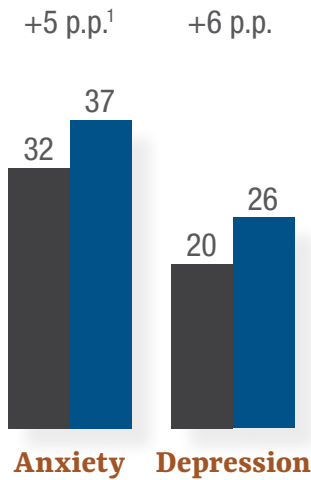


*"In the aftermath of the pandemic, individuals across the board will be way behind in terms of social skills due to isolation and a lack of interaction with others."*

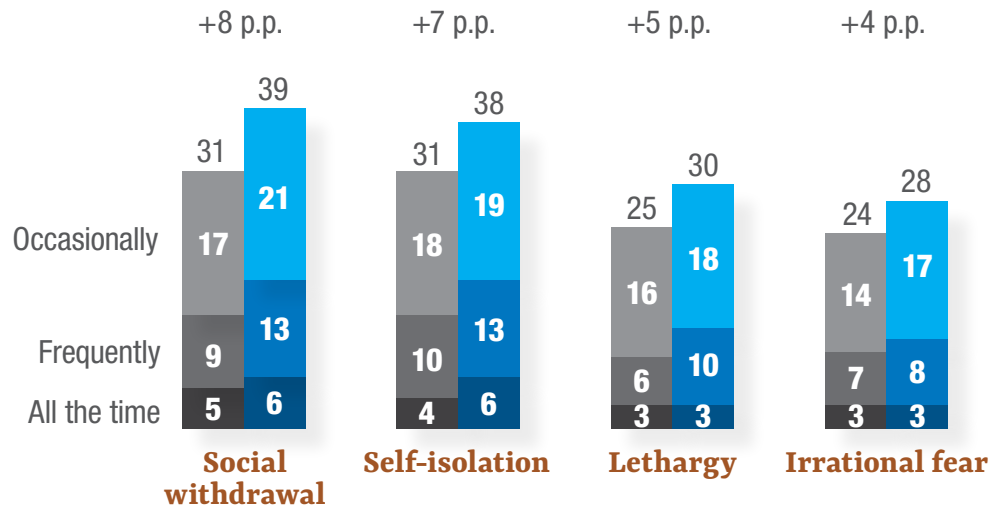
**—Reggie Kaji,  
Express franchise owner,  
Monroe, Brighton, Dearborn  
and Tecumseh, Michigan**

# Parents reported increases in mental health conditions and concerning behaviors in their children.

My child suffers from the following conditions, %



My child exhibits the following behaviors, %



Source: McKinsey study<sup>24</sup>

Pre-pandemic  
 During the pandemic

Mental health and academics are connected, with parents of students who suffered more academically reporting higher levels of mental health concerns.<sup>25</sup> Until the possibility of widespread COVID-19 transmission at school subsides, these academic and psychological effects—which only compound each other—will continue, if not worsen.





# College Interrupted

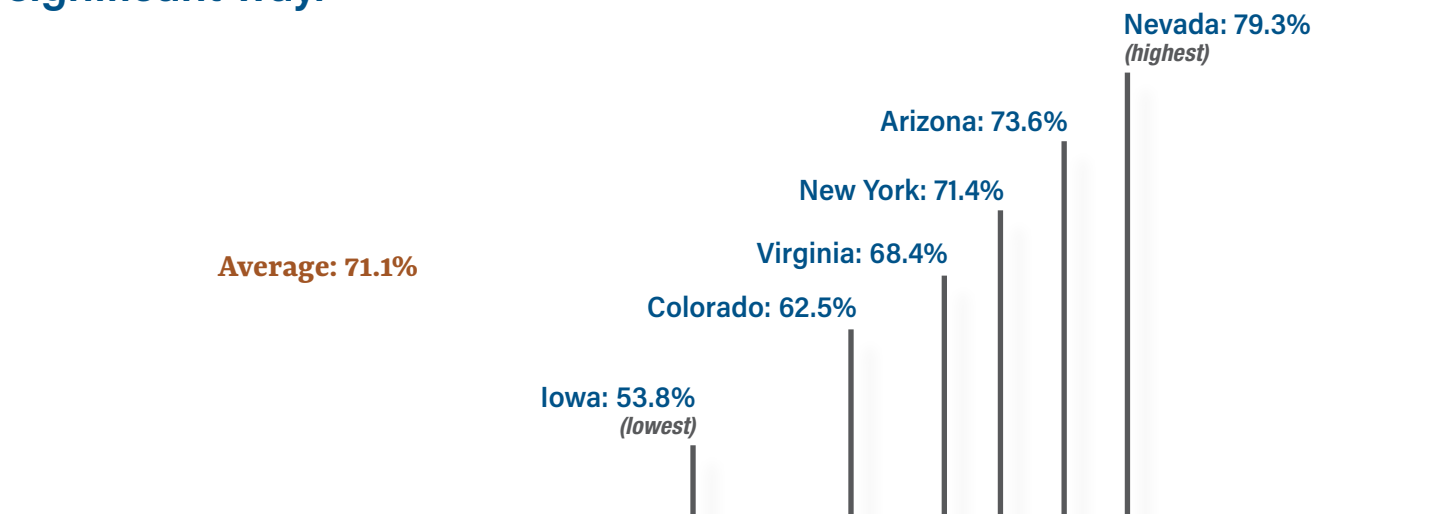
K-12 disruptions may grab more headlines, especially with debates over health protocols, but the disruptions in higher education have been severe, leading many to forego or delay higher education altogether—and also raising doubts that young people will be prepared for the workforce.

In fact, only 55% of adults now say that “current students will be prepared to enter the workforce after completing their highest level of education.”<sup>26</sup>

According to the Association for Career and Technical Education for the 2020-21 school year, almost 60% of CTE administrators reported lower enrollment in CTE programs. Only 8% reported increased enrollment.<sup>27</sup>

The Census Bureau found that 71.1% of adults in a household where at least one adult was planning on taking post-secondary classes this fall reported that those plans had either been canceled or changed in some significant way. Nevada ranked highest at 79.3% and Iowa lowest at 53.8%<sup>28</sup>

## Percentage of adults in households where at least one adult was planning on taking post-secondary classes this fall, but for whom those plans have either been canceled or changed in some significant way.



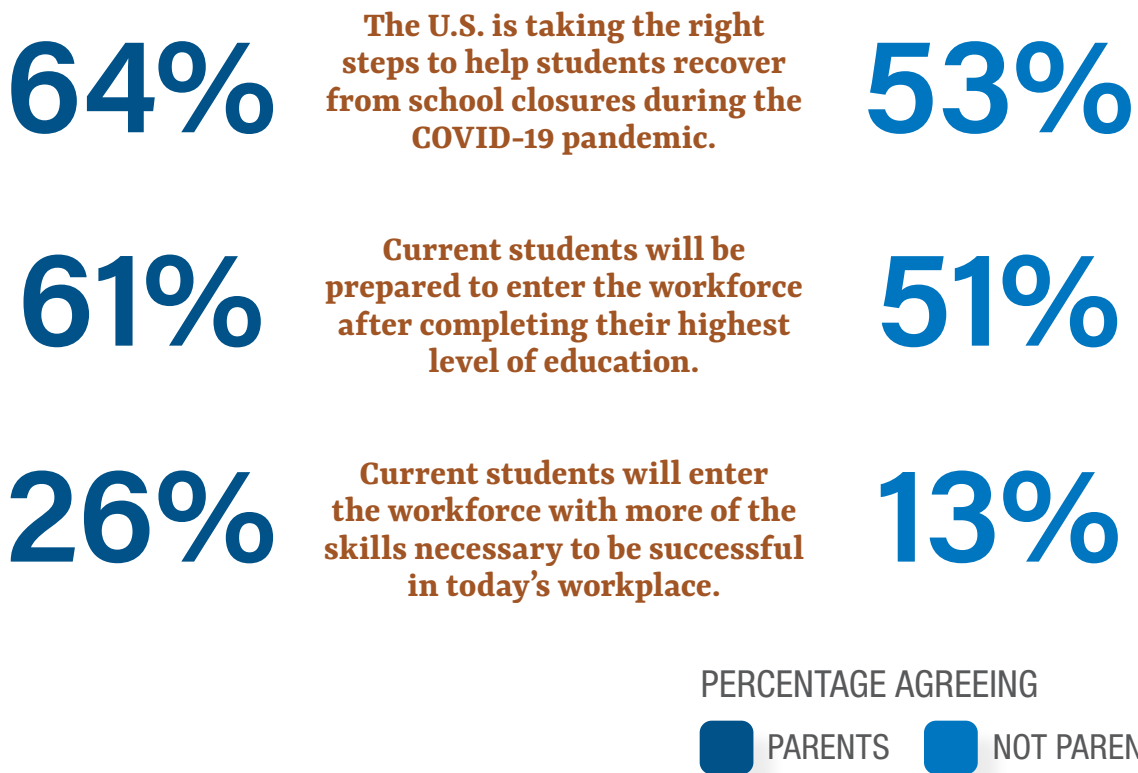
Post-secondary education is not a requirement for a successful career, but it can provide many of the skills that are in demand or make up for the shortcomings of primary and secondary schooling. That is just one reason why educational delays are a troubling sign for employers.



# Parental Perspective

In what may be an encouraging sign, parents have a more positive outlook and are more optimistic than those who are not parents about the implications of the “lost generation” and their ability to succeed in the workforce.

## Parents’ (Slightly) More Optimistic Outlook



In other areas, though, parents are more concerned or have seen more of the negative consequences firsthand.

Parents are more than twice as likely as those who are not parents to know someone who delayed school (45% vs. 21%), dropped out of higher education (35% vs. 16%) and dropped out of primary/secondary school (27% vs. 9%) during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>29</sup>

They are also more likely to think school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic pose challenges to younger Americans’ development of soft skills (82% vs. 76%) and physical health (77% vs. 71%).<sup>30</sup>





# Recession Reskilling: Not the Usual Trend

When a recession hits and mass layoffs displace millions of workers, many will pursue opportunities to gain new skills, hoping to position themselves for jobs that are still in demand. Emsi, an international provider of labor market data, explains: “Typically, economic upheaval will send Americans rushing back to school in order to gain new knowledge and skills, but not so this time.”<sup>31</sup>

The COVID-19 recession did not spur this drive for retraining and upskilling, even though one might expect many in the hardest hit sectors to look for new career paths. Instead, post-secondary enrollment “tanked.” In 2020, 460,000 fewer students were enrolled in post-secondary education than in 2019.<sup>32</sup>

It is not the case that there are no opportunities to gain new skills. Express franchise owner Nancy Reed explains, “There are many opportunities that exist in our area [in Texas] for displaced workers to upskill. We have received grants for skilled trade jobs in our area: welding, aerospace and industrial maintenance. However, displaced workers are not yet taking advantage of these opportunities.”

Nonetheless, some people used time during the pandemic to further their education. Around 3 in 10 Americans know someone who went back to school (31%) or signed up for continuing education beyond degree programs (30%) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whether the relatively lower rate of reskilling and retraining was due to the health risks of being in the classroom or the generosity of government benefits, one fact is clear: without the usual recession realignment, it is less likely that unemployed workers will be better equipped to re-enter the workforce in a higher-skilled, and higher-paying, job. It is also more likely that workers in suffering sectors, such as hospitality, will relocate to sectors that have more jobs to offer. All of this serves to perpetuate the skills gap.

*“The main difference between now, compared to 2008, is there are plenty of jobs available. Companies are willing to teach new skills and mentor the new generation of employees.”*

**—Michael Brady,  
Express franchise owner,  
Jacksonville West, Florida**



# Accelerating a Preexisting Demographic Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic did not create the skills gap or the worker shortage. Employers were regularly struggling to find talented workers years before the pandemic. COVID-19 did, however, exacerbate the problem—a problem that is rooted in demographics.

The researchers at Emsi label the crisis “the demographic drought” and “sansdemic,” noting that pre-pandemic “the people shortage ... was almost here.”<sup>33</sup>

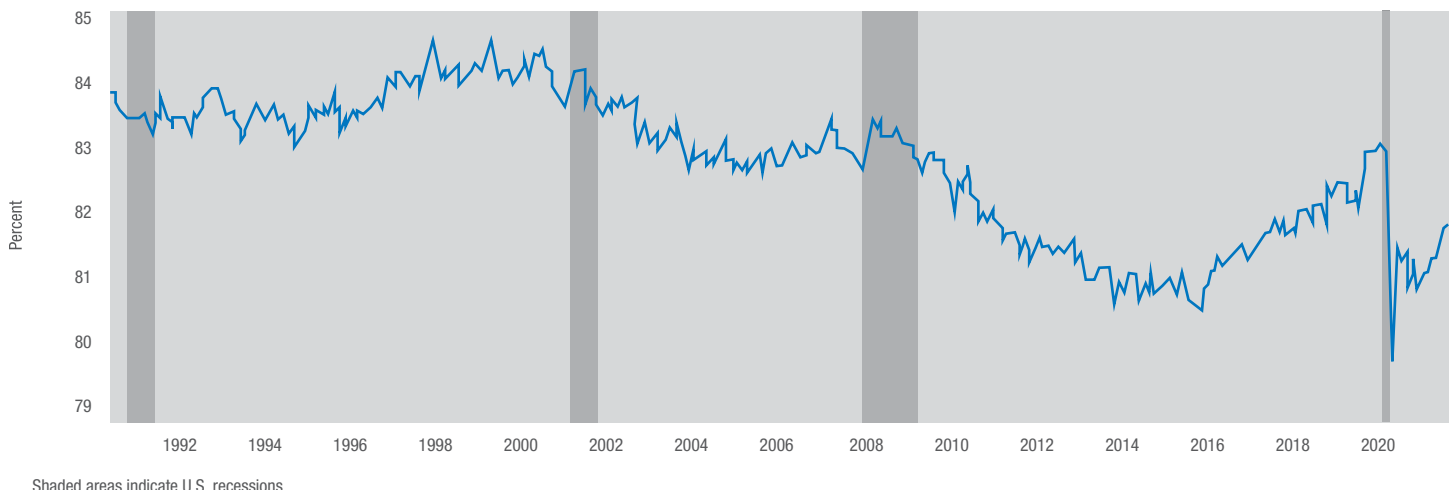
It is easy to see why: Baby Boomer retirement accelerated as labor force participation for “prime age” workers tanked. Meanwhile, the U.S. has seen the lowest birth rates in its history, meaning there is no relief in sight—at least not without a sudden increase in immigration.

**In the average year, 2 million baby boomers retire. In 2020, 3 million called it quits for good.<sup>34</sup>**

With the U.S. population projected to begin shrinking in the 2060s, the worker shortage is on track to get worse.<sup>35</sup> And now, future workers are even less likely to be well-prepared for these jobs.

That adds up to a worst-case scenario: *a shrinking pool of workers with a diminished skill set.*

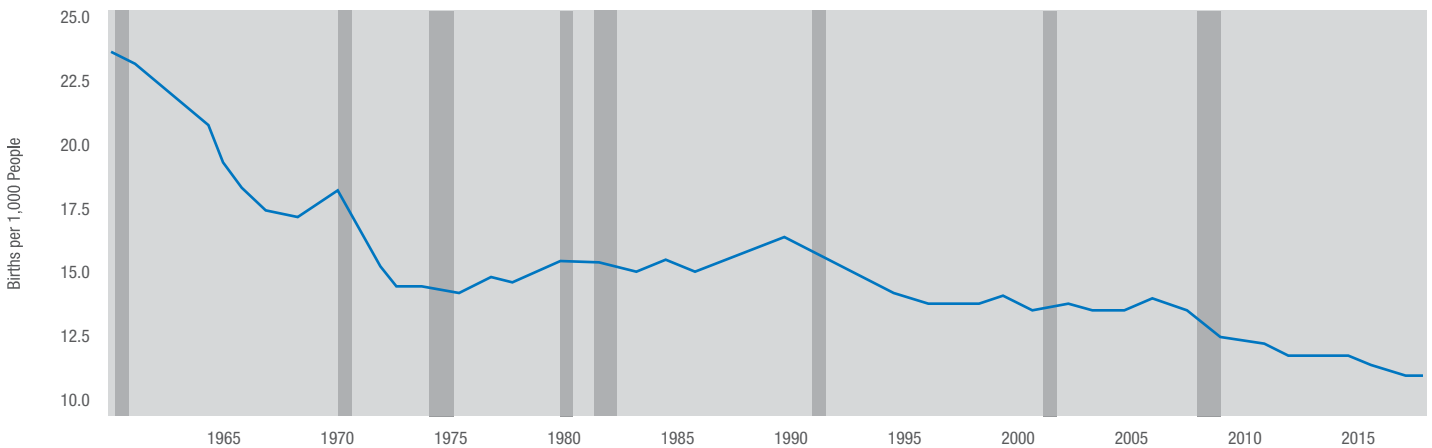
## Labor Force Participation Rate: 25-54, 1990–Present



Source: fred.gov, Bureau of Labor Statistics<sup>36</sup>



## Births Per 1,000 People, 1960–2019



Shaded areas indicate U.S. recessions.

Source: fred.gov, World Bank<sup>37</sup>

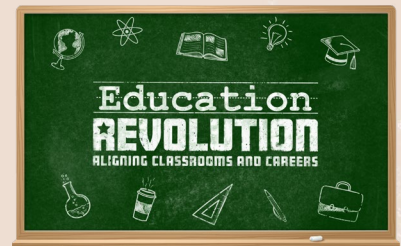
# Education Revolution

## It's time for a revolution.

The U.S. education system was already seen as failing students before the pandemic. According to a December 2019 poll fielded by The Harris Poll for Express, nearly 9 in 10 employees (87%) agreed a whole new approach to education, skills training and learning—an “education revolution”—is needed to prepare people for the workforce. And 40% “strongly agreed” with that sentiment.<sup>38</sup>

In 2019, 73% of employed Americans said they felt prepared entering the workforce after their highest level of education. Now, Americans are not so sure. Slightly more than half of U.S. adults (55%) think the current generation of students will be prepared, and only 12% say they will be very prepared.<sup>39</sup>

**Education Revolution:**  
Read the 2020 Express white paper,  
“Education Revolution: Aligning  
Classrooms and Careers”



## Students will have to catch up from even further behind.

Around three-quarters of Americans agree the education system hasn't caught up with the skills needed for today's workplace (76%) and that the education system has failed to evolve to meet the needs of the workforce (74%). The vast majority (85%) believe there needs to be more of a balance in education to match learning to actual career options.<sup>40</sup>

Students were already falling behind. Now they have even further to go to “catch up.”

When thinking about who is responsible for fixing the “lost generation of students,” Americans most commonly say the individuals themselves are responsible (52%). This is followed by parents of the individuals (45%), educators (e.g., teachers, school administrators, etc.) (43%), the U.S. Department of Education (39%) and employers (31%).<sup>41</sup>



## Who is responsible for fixing “the lost generation of students”?<sup>42</sup>



### Employers must play a role.

Even if Americans do not hold employers responsible, employers will need to take action. It won't be enough for employers to lament the state of the education system or its shortcomings. Employers will need to be prepared to offer more on-the-job training if they want to fill open positions.

Nine in 10 Americans (90%) say employers will need to make changes in order to accommodate the emerging generation of workers. The most common recommended change is to offer more job-specific training (51%), while 45% also recommend flexibility in work hours (45%) and 44% say employers will need to pay employees who have advanced skills higher salaries.<sup>43</sup>

### It's always time for a “refresh.”

Most Americans believe employees in general must “refresh” their hard skills to stay competitive in the current workforce (84%) and anyone who doesn't continue to learn in their career (e.g., staying up to date on new techniques, advancements, etc.) will be left behind in the workforce (78%).<sup>44</sup>

While there is a general consensus on the importance of continual learning, Americans are split on who is responsible for driving this. Around half say it's the employee's responsibility to find training programs to refresh one's skills (51%) while others think it's the employer's responsibility (49%).<sup>45</sup>

### There are some recent innovations worth keeping.

The pandemic disruption has fueled some innovation that could help close the skills gap. Parents are open to hybrid models, and many recognize that 100% in-person learning may not be ideal for their children.<sup>46</sup> The challenge will be making these models more predictable and accessible.

In Tennessee, the increased comfort with virtual education has allowed the state to provide students access to Advanced Placement courses, regardless of whether they are offered in-person or virtually.<sup>47</sup> Approaches like this could help to close educational disparities between large, well-funded schools and smaller, resource-scarce schools.



Online tutoring, virtual workshops and online guest speakers are practices that professors told the Chronicle of Higher Education are worth keeping.<sup>48</sup>

Administrators at Pomona College interviewed students to identify pandemic practices that they think should be retained long-term. Among them were recorded lectures, easy access to professors through digital communications and integrating appropriate digital platforms for instruction.<sup>49</sup>

A few new technologies, though, will not be enough to fix the larger structural problem.

## Express offers words of advice.

Express continues to offer much of the same advice we have previously, but now with greater urgency for educators, reformers and employers in particular:<sup>50</sup>

### For Students

Change is needed. But reform often moves slowly. Students who will enter the workforce in the coming years should work to identify careers that are in demand.

They should consider doing the following:

- Seek out opportunities in school or outside of school to hone job-seeking skills, as well as in-demand “soft skills” and technical skills.
- Research skills and qualifications that are required for in-demand jobs.
- Recognize that having a degree or certification in a given field does not guarantee employability in that field.

*“Virtual learning is incredibly beneficial to jobs that are in the administrative field or for computer-based positions. Flexible learning opportunities will be key to educating the workforce of the future.”*

**—Jon Noceda,  
Express franchise owner,  
Chula Vista and El Cajon, California**



## Resources

Job Genius  
[ExpressPros.com/JobGenius](https://ExpressPros.com/JobGenius)

Express has crafted Job Genius, an educational program designed to teach young adults how to successfully enter the workforce. The program includes guidance on resume writing, interviewing, soft skills and money management.



## For Job Seekers

Finding work is a challenge, especially if you're told that you don't yet have the right skills or experience after completing your education. Keep in mind the following:

- You are not alone. This frustration is shared by many job seekers.
- You can find opportunities to gain tangible skills outside of a formal classroom setting.
- Demonstrating a willingness to learn when interviewing can help reassure a prospective employer about any skills you may lack.

## For Employers

- Provide structured opportunities for improving soft skills in the workplace, as this can be more effective than expecting employees to learn them on their own.
- Help local education officials understand the gaps in their curriculum.
- Offer to partner with local high schools and college to offer work-study opportunities.
- Raise awareness among current employees about the opportunities they have for employer-sponsored education.

## Resources

### Get Ahead

[ExpressPros.com/GetAhead](https://www.expresspros.com/GetAhead)

Through a video series and blog articles, Express offers tips on improving a resume and preparing for an interview.

### Job Journey

[JobJourney.com](https://www.jobjourney.com)

In addition to articles on how to land a job, this blog offers help with how to handle a job offer, information on getting along with co-workers, ways to deal with a tough boss, retirement guides and more.

### Express Certifications

[ExpressPros.com/Certifications](https://www.expresspros.com/Certifications)

Express offers a Business Office Technology Certification and a Career Preparedness Certification, both of which are designed to verify individuals are fully prepared to enter the workforce.

## For Educators and Reformers

- Adjust curriculum to match career realities.
- Partner with local employers to understand what skills students need to refine before entering the workplace.
- Advocate reform with state and federal leaders.
- Partner with businesses to create opportunities for work-study, apprenticeships or other “earn and learn” models.

## For Career Counselors

- Help job seekers recognize their growth opportunities.
- Help job seekers understand what jobs will be in demand in their area before they consider additional education.
- Provide referrals to resources to hone their skills.
- Reassure job seekers that they are not the only ones whose education may not have fully prepared them for the workplace.
- Coordinate with local educators and reformers to develop apprenticeship opportunities or work-study options.
- Investigate opportunities for grants that would support the development of apprenticeships or similar programs.





## Lost and Found

The pandemic will likely one day become far more manageable, and sudden school closures and disruptions less frequent. But the damage has been done, and the pre-existing worker shortage will not fade away.


To ensure we do not indeed “lose” a generation due to learning failures, we will need a commitment to serious change. Returning to the pre-pandemic status quo is insufficient. No one should believe that returning to some old “normal” is the only goal. Normal was not good enough.

The situation demands new innovation—driven by a sense of urgency and awareness of the present and future crisis.

*That’s how we save a generation.*

*“COVID helped to accelerate many trends already happening in the workforce and speed up the labor shortage, but this is an overall demographic issue that our economy will face for years to come.”*

**—Janis Petrini,  
Express franchise owner,  
Express Employment Professionals,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan**




*“The current labor shortage and skills gap will continue for many years.”*

**—Michael Brady,  
Express franchise owner,  
Jacksonville West, Florida**



# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Kevin McElrath, “Nearly 93% of Households With School-Age Children Report Some Form of Distance Learning During COVID-19, Census Bureau, August 26, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/08/schooling-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.html>.
- <sup>2</sup> Allyson Waller, Kalley Huang and Mandi Cai, “At least 45 districts shut down in-person classes due to COVID-19 cases, affecting more than 40,000 students,” Texas Tribune, September 3, 2021, <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/09/03/texas-covid-school-districts-shut-down/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Express Employment Professionals—Harris Poll Survey, July-August 2021.
- <sup>4</sup> “A Workerless Recovery?” Express Employment Professionals, June 23, 2021, <https://www.expresspros.com/Newsroom/America-Employed/A-Workerless-Recovery-Job-Seekers-Turn-Cold-Shoulder-to-Hot-Economy.aspx?&referrer=http://www.expresspros.com/Newsroom/America-Employed-News-List.aspx?LangType=1033&PageNumber=2>.
- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings: Total Nonfarm [JTSJOL], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/JTSJOL>, September 5, 2021.
- <sup>6</sup> Express Employment Professionals—Harris Poll Survey, July-August 2021.
- <sup>7</sup> Express Employment Professionals—Harris Poll Survey, March-April 2021.
- <sup>8</sup> This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.
- <sup>9</sup> Emma Dorn, Bryan Hancock, Jimmy Sarakatsannis, and Ellen Viruleg, “COVID-19 and education: The lingering effects of unfinished learning,” McKinsey & Co., July 27, 2021, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning>.
- <sup>10</sup> Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, Viruleg, “COVID-19 and education.”
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