



Adams County Education Consortium 8th Grade Career Expo 2026 POST ANALYSIS

Executive Summary & Key Analysis

An analysis of the **2,665 student responses** from the 2026 Student Career Expo post-survey reveals strong student engagement, clear post-event career interest, and actionable opportunities for follow-up guidance. The data encompasses students across multiple school districts (including Adams 12 with 1,335 responses, 27J Brighton with 653 responses, and Westminster with 319 responses).

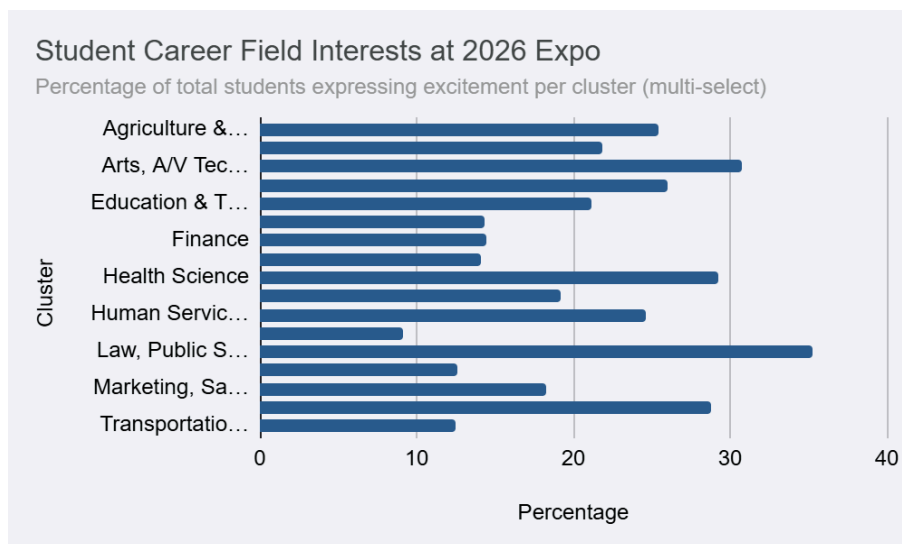
Key Takeaway 1: Broad Career Exploration Sparks High Student Engagement across Diverse Career Clusters

• **High Career Idea Discovery:** Over **91.9% of surveyed students** identified new, appealing career fields during the event (44.9% discovered 1–2 ideas, 37.5% discovered 3–5 ideas, and 9.5% discovered more than 5 ideas). Only 7.4% reported not finding an appealing field.

Top Career Cluster Interests: The leading areas of interest expressed by students were:

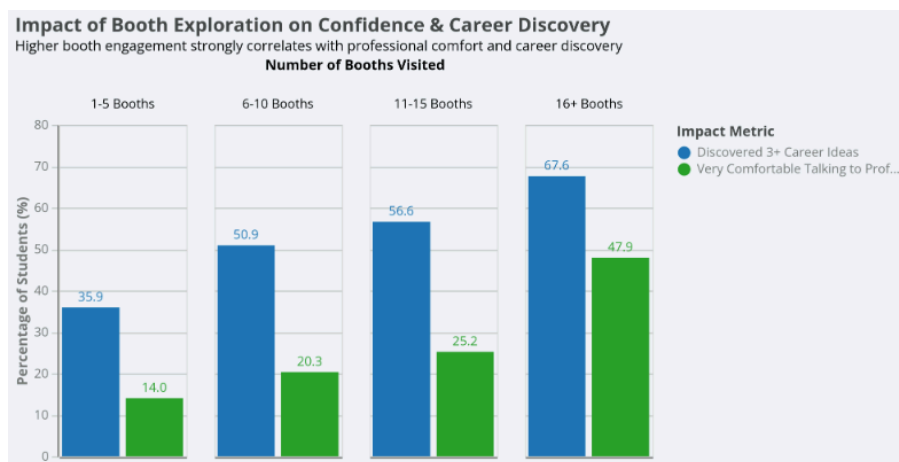
- **Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security:** 35.3% (940 students)
- **Arts, A/V Technology & Communications:** 30.8% (820 students)
- **Health Science:** 29.3% (781 students)
- **Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM):** 28.8% (768 students)

Strong Intent to Enroll in CTE: **64.5% of students** indicated that taking Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes in high school is "Important" (48.7%) or "Very Important" (15.8%) to them after visiting student-run booths.



Key Takeaway 2: Greater Booth Exploration Directly Increases Student Confidence and Career Clarity

- **Confidence Building:** Active participation had a direct, positive correlation with professional communication skills. While only **14.0%** of students visiting 1–5 booths felt "Very Comfortable" talking to business professionals, **47.9%** of students visiting 16+ booths felt "Very Comfortable" (a **3.4x increase**).
- **Enhanced Career Discovery:** Students visiting 16+ booths were nearly **twice as likely to discover 3+ career ideas** (67.6%) compared to those visiting 1–5 booths (35.9%).
- **Overall Comfort Level:** Across all respondents, **66.0% of students** left the Expo feeling either "Comfortable" (45.9%) or "Very Comfortable" (20.1%) interacting with industry leaders, demonstrating the value of hands-on networking.

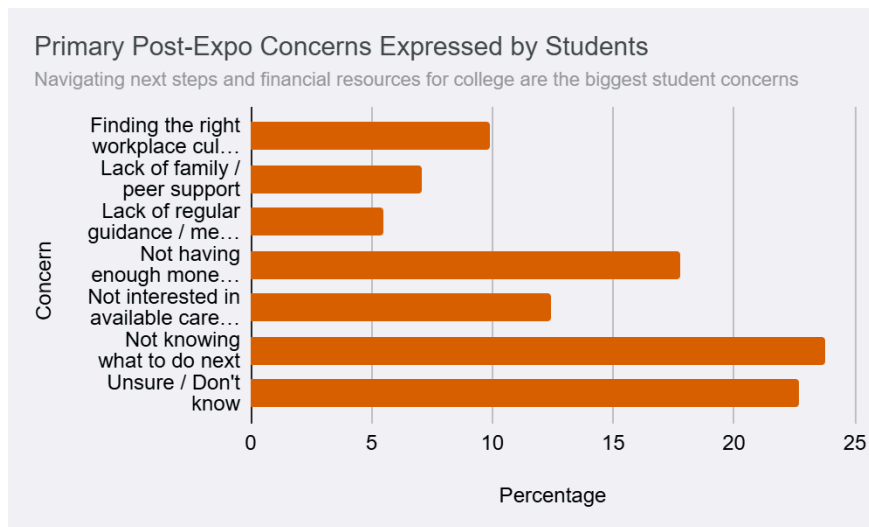


Key Takeaway 3: Students Request Follow-Up Guidance on Next Steps and Financial Resources

Navigating the Path Forward: The single most prominent concern cited by students post-Expo was **"Not knowing what to do next"** (23.8% / 633 students), closely followed by uncertainty (22.7% / 604 students). **Financial Concerns:** 17.8% (475 students) cited **"Not having enough money for college"** as their biggest obstacle, highlighting a critical need for early financial aid and scholarship education.

Proactive Student Action Plans: When asked what steps they must take to achieve their career goals, students overwhelmingly prioritized:

- **Continuing career exploration:** 54.9% (1,462 students)
- **Improving grades:** 52.3% (1,395 students)
- **Finding financial resources & scholarships:** 37.9% (1,009 students)
- **Volunteering or job shadowing:** 35.7% (952 students)
- **Connecting with mentors:** 34.7% (924 students)



Strategic Recommendations

- 1. Structured Post-Expo Roadmap:** Provide middle and high school counselors with follow-up toolkits to help the **23.8% of students** who don't know what to do next ie. map their Expo experience into specific CTE course selections.
- 2. Financial Literacy & College Affordability Workshops:** Address the **17.8% of students** concerned about post-secondary costs by integrating early financial planning, apprenticeship, and scholarship guidance into middle and high school career programming.
- 3. Encourage Active Exploration:** Future Expos should incentivize students to visit at least **10–15 booths**, as data confirms higher booth volume substantially elevates student self-efficacy and career discovery. How can we encourage this and also create alternative experiences for less outgoing students to gain greater exposure?