





ALABAMA STUDENTS HAVE TALENT

Using aptitudes to power a skills-based economy

Alabama has a rich history rooted in manufacturing and agriculture, but its economy is rapidly evolving as demand for STEM-related careers is on the rise. A focus on skills-based hiring, work-based learning, and student apprenticeship means Alabama must focus on quality career guidance as early as middle school.

1. Help Alabama students discover their aptitudes and guide skill development

Identifying student aptitudes is crucial before deciding which skills to develop. It leads to a better return on investment of time, effort, and money, while also increasing student engagement as they see the relevancy of what they're learning and know they are pursuing their best-fit pathway. This approach not only meets changing industry needs but also strengthens the Alabama economy.

 Definition	 Basis	 Example	 Measured by
<p>An aptitude reveals the underlying potential of a person to acquire the skills to perform competently given adequate time and training.</p>	<p>Naturally born with certain aptitudes.</p>	<p>Spatial visualization is an aptitude.</p>	<p>YouScience® Aptitude & Career Discovery performance-based aptitude measures.</p>
<p>A skill is a current capability, knowledge, or competency that an individual possesses today.</p>	<p>Earned or learned overtime, for example, work-based experiences.</p>	<p>Welding is a skill.</p>	<p>Certifications, degrees, and demonstrated on-the-job skills.</p>

2. Implement the roadmap for aptitude-enabled education

Measuring aptitudes is important in earlier stages of career-connected learning for students. Once aptitudes are determined, skills should be developed as students navigate career paths. See the chart below for the full student journey from career exploration to career navigation.

The student career-connected learning experience



Career Discovery

Career Discovery

The student:

- becomes aware of work, jobs, careers
- discovers aptitudes and interests to build self awareness and confidence
- begins to explore career opportunities



Career Exploration

Career Exploration

The student:

- begins planning for education and career
- takes related courses
- pursues experiential learning
- considers further education and training



Career Navigation

Career Navigation

The student:

- develops job seeking skills
- seeks paid employment
- uses skills developed to navigate the world of work

How to identify a true aptitude assessment

Many assessments claim to use aptitudes in career guidance. These assessments use survey instruments to ask students how skilled they think they are, even though most students have no internal guideline to base that on. Assessments that rely on performance-based measures of aptitudes, like YouScience, are preferred because they have been normed and proven longitudinally. They don't require students to have any prior knowledge and are not limited by a student's lack of self awareness or career exposure.

To identify a true aptitude assessment, ask these two questions:

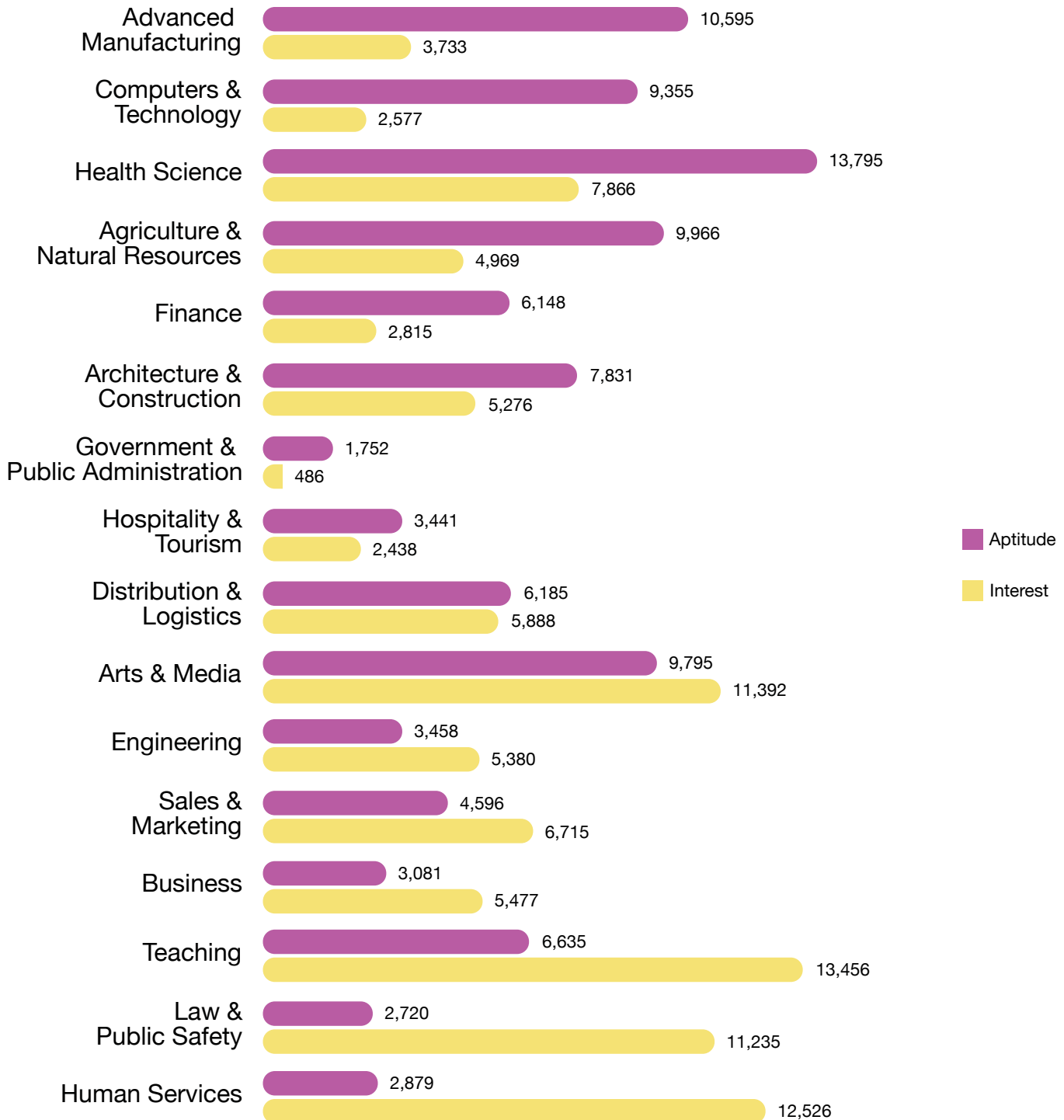
1. Is it a self-assessment?
2. How does the assessment use aptitude input to recommend careers?

Since students have no basis to self-judge, self-assessments are fundamentally useless. In order to recommend careers, the assessment should use performance-based measures of aptitudes that are normed for the age appropriate population, followed by an algorithmic method to match students.

3. Uncover Alabama students' aptitudes for in-demand careers

YouScience data shows Alabama students have aptitudes for careers in Computers & Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture & Natural Resources, and Health Science. However, they lack exposure and, as a result, are not pursuing these careers in adequate numbers. The career exposure gap is especially prevalent in underserved communities, including for [Black students](#).

Alabama students' aptitudes vs. interests in top career clusters





As we start to change the way we train and upskill students and job seekers, we must rely on higher-quality data. This is not only crucial to those seeking to develop their skills but also for those who provide the education and training. School districts and workforce development centers need to know which programs to invest in, develop, and expand. If they can align the needs of industry with the untapped talent of the community, they are empowered to create a stronger, more diverse workforce.

About YouScience

YouScience® is America's first integrated student success and workforce development platform and is the preferred choice of more than 7,000 educational institutions and millions of users nationwide.

Empower Alabama students to succeed in a skills-based economy

