



Blandin Foundation staff met with fifty-one students from nine local high schools

to hear their thoughts about career discernment and development opportunities, their perceptions of community and higher education, and their reasons for whether they choose to pursue education beyond high school. Blandin Foundation staff engaged in structured listening sessions with students and uncovered key themes from the conversations. Blandin Foundation thanks the participating schools for providing space and recruiting participants and the student participants for sharing your perspectives.

Your voices are important to informing our work.

Here's what we heard you say

Choosing a career path is hard and confusing.

- » You tend to choose your career goals first and then decide what college experience you would need to achieve those goals.
- » You sometimes don't know what career goal you want.
- » You worry that you might choose the wrong thing.
- » You get conflicting messages about needing to know your career path and sticking to that before entering higher education and whether college is even something you should pursue.



Overall, you think that continuing education beyond high school provides a variety of opportunities, but:

- » You don't always want to go far away.
- » You recognize that college is expensive, and you worry about wasting time and money.
- » Sometimes you aren't sure if you're prepared for school after high school and worry about not being able to finish.

What we are doing as a result



- » Increasing research into career exploration and development programs that can help young people understand their strengths and interests and how potential career opportunities might make the most of those.
- » Exploring ways we can support local schools in strengthening career exploration and development opportunities for young people in grades 6-12.
- » Continuing to consider expenses beyond tuition when calculating our scholarship award sizes and consider how the scholarship program can adapt to help bridge more of the financial gap students face when attending school after high school.
- » Provide learning opportunities to help students better understand higher education systems and processes like the FAFSA, financial aid, petitions, etc.
- » Encouraging families and other supportive adults to help reduce student stress and anxiety around making higher education choices by sharing the stories of their own educational journeys.