

# Work-Based Learning Report

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## Introduction

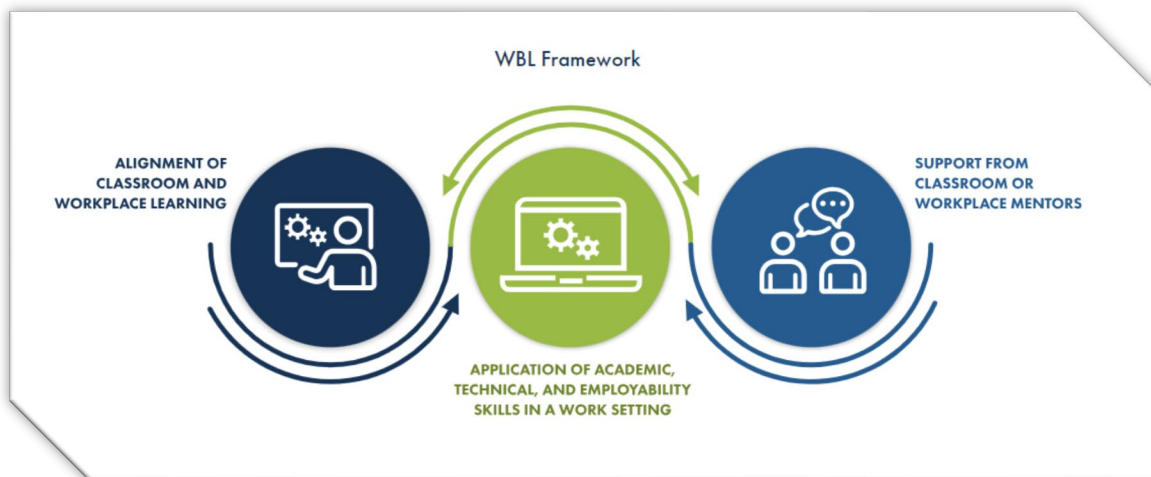
Section 1004.015, *Florida Statutes*, requires that the Talent Development Council identify barriers and best practices in the facilitation of work-based learning opportunities for students in middle and high school. The Florida Department of Education (DOE) and CareerSource Florida collaborated to produce the following information with facilitation from the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Office.

Most of the information shown in this report is derived from the Florida Department of Education's Division of Career and Adult Education, Florida Department of Commerce, and CareerSource Florida. The Talent Development Council recognizes the importance of the legislative charge behind this report and is committed to providing sound recommendations based on observation and analysis of best practices.

The report specifically identifies best practices for collaboration between district school boards, local workforce development boards, and local businesses and business groups throughout the state. Recommendations for legislative action are informed by these findings to further facilitate these work-based learning opportunities.

## Work-Based Learning

What is work-based learning? Quite simply it is firsthand work that develops relationships with industry professionals and is classroom integrated. The U.S. Department of Education depicts the following components of work-based learning.<sup>1</sup>



Work-based learning helps to meet industry demand for a more skilled workforce by providing opportunities for students to receive training, learn skills, and gain experience. It allows for student engagement and to reflect on their learning. The idea of hands-on learning is not new; however, until recently, work-based learning was not defined in a meaningful way. Because work-based learning encompasses many things and can be broadly defined there are inherent challenges in coordination and developing effective strategies to determine student success. Moreover, it is locally driven which can create differences in implementation around a very varied state such as Florida.

<sup>1</sup> Lee, Carolyn. *Work-Based Learning Tool Kit*. RTI International Inc. through contract with the U.S. Department of Education. Contract No. ED-VAE-12-C0051. <https://cte.ed.gov/wbltoolkit/>

While the concept of work-based learning has been around for decades, its mention in Federal Legislation has only occurred within the last decade.

**The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V)** was signed in July 2018 and reauthorized the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. The act which took effect July 1, 2019, and is authorized through July 30, 2035, will provide nearly \$1.4 billion annually for Career and Technical Education programs nationwide. Perkins V expanded provisions for work-based learning by providing the first formal federal definition of work-based learning (see “Definitions” section below). This definition allows a multitude of activities to count as work-based learning and it supports work-based learning through the new secondary program quality indicator.

The Florida Department of Education’s Perkins Four-Year State Plan was approved in June 2020. As part of Governor DeSantis’ goal to be the number one state for workforce education by 2030, one of Florida’s goals guiding the implementation of the state plan is to engage industry partners to drive program innovation and work-based learning opportunities. This is being done statewide through coordination and collaboration with public-private partnerships such as Space Florida and CareerSource Florida, as well as the Florida Department of Commerce, the Florida Department of Education, and the Governor’s REACH Office.

**The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015** replaced the No Child Left Behind Act. ESSA asked that local education agency plans include information on how they will support programs that coordinate and integrate work-based learning opportunities that provide in-depth interaction with industry professionals and options to earn academic credit. It allows the use of local funds to provide high-quality professional development on effective strategies to integrate work-based learning for teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Lastly, it requires states to submit an application for federal funds to the U.S. Department of Education that should describe how the state will evaluate the effectiveness of programs and activities, which includes a description of performance indicators and measures of success. This may include indicators for successful completion of work-based learning opportunities. Florida’s state plan for ESSA was approved in September 2018.

**The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014** is designed to strengthen and improve our nation’s public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers. WIOA can support work-based learning through youth funding. CareerSource Florida and the state’s 24 local workforce development boards support work-based learning for ages 14-24 as described later in this report.

## **Definitions**

Both Federal Law and Florida Law define work-based learning. Federal Law (Perkins V, Sec. 3[55]) defines work-based learning as “sustained interactions with industry or community professional in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required of a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.”

Section 446.0915, *Florida Statutes*, substantiates the definition of work-based learning to include “...means an interaction with industry or community professionals that occurs in a workplace setting, to the extent possible, or a simulated environment at an educational institution that allows firsthand

experience with tasks required in a given career field, is aligned with curriculum and instruction, and is provided in partnership with an educational institution.

A work-based learning opportunity must meet all of the following criteria:

- a. Be developmentally appropriate.
- b. Identify learning objectives for the term of experience.
- c. Explore multiple aspects of an industry.
- d. Develop workplace skills and competencies.
- e. Assess performance.
- f. Provide opportunities for work-based reflection.
- g. Link to next steps in career planning and preparation in a student's chosen career pathway.
- h. Be provided in an equal and fair manner.
- i. Be documented and reported in compliance with state and federal labor laws."

A work-based learning opportunity should prioritize paid experiences, such as apprenticeship, preapprenticeship, and diversified education programs.

Each district school board shall ensure that each student enrolled in grades 9 through 12 has access to at least one work-based learning opportunity.

The State Board of Education has adopted Rule 6A-23.0042, *Florida Administrative Code*, which includes uniform minimum standards and guidelines for determining student eligibility, obligations of employers, and requirements of institutions that offer work-based learning opportunities.

Work-Based Learning Work-Based Learning Must:

- Involve interactions with industry or community professionals,
- Involve firsthand experience with tasks required in a given career field,
- Be aligned with curriculum and instruction,
- Be provided in partnership with an educational institution.

Work-Based Learning May:

- Take place on- or off-campus,
- Be virtual/simulated or real-world, service-providing,
- Be paid or unpaid,
- Be credit bearing or non-credit bearing (that is, may be a part of a course specific to work-based learning or be integrated within/parallel to other coursework),
- Be as short as one occurrence or last years,
- Range from secondary through adulthood.

Jobs for the Future Center for Apprenticeship & Work-based Learning provides a framework for work-based learning. It states that "Work-based learning looks beyond the classroom to expand academic and technical learning and accelerate advancement along career pathways. Work-based learning is defined as a student or worker completing meaningful job tasks in a workplace that develops readiness for work, knowledge, and skills that support entry or advancement in a particular career field. Work-based

learning supports a continuum of lifelong learning and skill development for a range of workers and learners—K-12 students, young adults, college students, adult jobseekers, and incumbent workers”.<sup>2</sup> Work-based learning is a spectrum that involves career exploration, career exposure, career engagement, and career experience.

**Career Exploration** builds awareness of careers. These activities do not take place in the workplace and are not work-based learning but provide a foundation for work-based learning and prepare participants to make the most of opportunities. Activities include career fairs, industry projects, interest inventories, and mock interviews.

**Career Exposure** is an introduction to an industry and brings participants to the workplace for short periods of time with the goal of gaining information about an industry and its occupations. This can include activities such as job shadowing, company tours, simulations, interviews, and mentoring.

**Career Engagement** is an opportunity for participants to gain basic technical or employability skills in a given field. This can include internships, pre-apprenticeships, and cooperative education.

**Career Experience** engages participants to gain specific skills along with related classroom or other instruction in a particular industry or occupation. This can include registered apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and work-based courses.

The Florida Department of Education’s Division of Career and Adult Education has created Florida’s Work-Based Learning Quality Framework and Needs Assessment. It defines six elements of quality work-based learning outlined below.

High quality work-based learning must be **safe**. This entails ensuring that students are given safety training and any necessary equipment prior to work commencing. Workplace safety is monitored throughout the experience, including through regular, structured site visits. Students need to be trained on how to report harassment, discrimination, and injury prior to work commencing. Students are to be appropriately insured with either workers’ compensation insurance or medical insurance coverage for injury/illness related to the work-based learning opportunity. If the employer supervises a minor child, background checks are required, pursuant to Rule 6A-23.0042, Florida Administrative Code.

High quality work-based learning should be **accessible**. Enrollment and participation data for work-based learning courses and programs should be analyzed to identify enrollment gaps and access challenges. Participation challenges, such as those related to transportation, digital access, and/or professional attire, are to be identified and reduced. High quality work-based learning should include measures to create opportunities to ensure students participating in work-based learning are representative of the larger student body. For students with disabilities worksite accommodations should be established prior to work commencing. Worksite visits and experience evaluations can identify gaps, if any, in worksite accommodations.

High quality work-based learning should be **skills building**. A training agreement between the employer and student should be collaboratively developed by all relevant parties to outline the roles, responsibilities, and the skills goals of the work-based learning experience. Training agreements are

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<sup>2</sup> Cahill, Charlotte and Hartung, Kyle. *Work-Based Learning Framework*. Jobs for the Future, Inc. 7 May 2018. <https://www.jff.org/idea/work-based-learning-framework/>

required for work-based learning that is multi-day and involves a third-party supervisor that is not the instructor. Students need assessment for growth and feedback. Mastery can be assessed throughout the work-based learning experience through a variety of means, such as work observation/evaluation, standardized assessment/certification, project completion, or interview. Students should be trained on foundational concepts, including, but not limited to, rules, procedures, policies, and professionalism expectations. Students should receive ongoing coaching based on observations and assessments.

High quality work-based learning should be relationship building, because relationships matter. Students should be able to have sustained interactions with industry professionals and form lasting relationships. Students should be presented with a wide variety of opportunities to network with different types of industry professionals. After the work-based learning experience is complete, relationship maintenance should be encouraged through sharing of contact information and providing reconnection opportunities.

High quality work-based learning should be **career preparatory**. Students should be placed in work-based learning opportunities aligned with their career goals. Work-based learning should be aligned to curriculum and instruction in the classroom. The work-based learning experience should facilitate the development of content relevant to the student's future employment and/or postsecondary education. This can include things such as developing a resume, a portfolio of work products, professional online presence such as LinkedIn, letter of recommendation, and/or attainment of a credential of value. Students should be given structured opportunities to reflect on their work-based learning experience, including what they accomplished, what they learned about themselves, how their future academic and career plans have been affected by their experience, and how the work-based learning opportunity could be improved for future students. Finally, section 446.0915, *Florida Statutes*, requires that students be given career and postsecondary guidance and counseling related to their career path.

Lastly, high quality work-based learning should be **collaboratively managed**. This should entail that the student and the employer have an informed voice and choice regarding the placement, operation, and evaluation of the work-based learning experience. The work-based learning instructor should regularly visit the work site (in-person and virtually) to ensure the needs of both the student and the employer are being met. All relevant personnel should be fully trained, equipped, and engaged in all aspects of the work-based learning experience. This includes employers, counselors, administrators, coordinators, and instructors.

Rule 6A-23.0042, *Florida Administrative Code*, requires a review if the work-based learning needs assessment at least every two years in consultation with instructors, students, employer representatives, and other relevant stakeholders.

## Benefits of Work-based Learning

Work-based learning provides benefits to participants and employers. It is shown to increase high-school graduation rates and grade point averages, employment after graduation, starting salaries, and postsecondary matriculation. It does this because work-based learning helps to build real-world skills. It improves student education perceptions and allows students to explore career opportunities. Additionally, work-based learning increases the competitiveness of student resumes and applications due to work experience and it develops industry networking.

For employers work-based learning offers a sustainable, talented, and varied workforce population by supplying low cost, customizable employee training. It improves brand awareness and community image

through stronger work culture of community service. Work-based learning can help employers lower position vacancy rates and foster increased job commitment. It can also help lower training and recruitment costs. Additionally, there is the potential for tax savings with programs like the Experiential Learning Tax Credit as discussed below.

#### Potential Florida Incentives to Employers

**Workers Compensation Reimbursement Program**<sup>3</sup> allows employers, including school districts and Florida College System institutions, to apply to the Department of Financial Services (DFS) for reimbursement of the proportionate cost of workers' compensation premium paid during the fiscal year for students participating in work-based learning opportunities in the previous state fiscal year.

**Florida Experiential Learning Tax Credit**<sup>4</sup> is a Corporate Income Tax/Franchise Tax incentive that provides a tax credit to a qualified business in the amount of \$2,000 per apprentice, preapprentice, or student interns up to five per year, per corporation for taxable years that begin within calendar years 2022-2025. The maximum tax credit per year is \$10,000 and the credit may be carried forward up to two taxable years.

## Types of Work-based Learning Most Commonly Offered in Middle and High School

### Career Exploration (middle and early high school)

Career exploration or awareness activities prepare students for work-based learning experiences. These activities help students assess their own personal interests and talents and the education and/or training needed to pursue a particular career path. Career exploration activities will hopefully lead to a greater understanding of work, various industries, and occupations available in those industries.

Examples of these activities include:

**Career Fairs** allow employers representing various industry or career areas to come together at the school or alternate location to share information about their business, job, and educational needs for those jobs. Businesses may set up booths or display various equipment or other career related items for students to see. Students may visit different demonstrations, hear presentations, or talk to industry representatives about various aspects of the represented occupation or industry. For example, a consortium of districts collaborate to offer North Florida Worlds of Work, a career fair set on the campus of the Tallahassee Community College that connects over one hundred employers with over three thousand middle and high school students.

**Guest Speakers** provide exposure to potential careers by allowing a speaker to present information on the speaker's career, business, or industry. Guest speakers can be in person or virtual but should allow for questions from students. This activity helps students identify areas of interest and make connections between school and the workplace. For instance, the Hillsborough County School District participates in the Great American Teach-In, which brings in parents and local community members to share about their career experience to raise awareness of options available to students.

**Career Interest Assessments** are self-assessments that students can take to learn about industries and occupations that might align with their abilities, interests, and values. Assessments may ask about topics

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<sup>3</sup> Fla. Stat. § 446.54 (2021).

<sup>4</sup> Fla. Stat. § 220.198 (2023).



such as hobbies and academic interests which can help match students to potential occupations. This will allow students to complete additional research on areas of interest. Florida's Career Planning and Work-Based Learning System (Xello) has multiple career assessments that students can complete to learn about in-demand jobs in Florida that they might not have otherwise considered.

**Mock Interviews** are role-playing scenarios that allow students to both question and be questioned with the intent of learning more about a career, its requirements, and speaking skills. To assist with this the Florida Department of Education has produced a mock interview lesson plan used by districts to give students experience responding to common interview prompts. In addition, artificial intelligence interfaces exist online for students to practice interview skills within a practice environment.

#### Career Exposure (high school)

**Workplace Tours** are a structured activity in which students visit a workplace, learn about the business, observe work in progress, meet employees, and ask questions. Workplace tours allow students to learn about a specific type of work or industry and the career options it can offer. Ideally, tours should be followed up with classroom instruction to allow students to ask additional questions. A good example of this is the Hillsborough County School District participates in Florida Construction Career Days, hosted by Suncoast Utility Contractors Association, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the Florida Transportation Builders Association, and numerous businesses. Students are bussed to the local fairgrounds and receive educational presentations as well as opportunities to use certain heavy construction machinery, like a backhoe, in a supervised and safe setting.

**Externships** are a structured, time-limited, career training experience in which learners are placed at a worksite to observe. Externships differ from internships in that the focus is on job shadowing and education and are typically of shorter duration than internships. Externships may last only a few days to a few weeks. Columbia County School District offers paid summer externships to their Career and Technical Education instructors to update and sharpen their industry skills so they can bring what they have learned back to the classroom.

**Informational Interviews** allow students to interview a workplace professional about his or her chosen occupation, industry, and educational and career path. It allows the student to get a realistic view of the business, industry or occupation and can help make connections between school and the workplace. The Florida Department of Education offers a template for students to use to interview friends, family, or other professionals about their industry.

**Job Shadowing** allows students to make brief worksite visits to spend time with individual workers learning what knowledge, skills, and education their jobs entail. The length of the job shadowing experience is based on individual career objectives designed and agreed to by the participating business or industry, student, teacher, and parent. Job shadowing helps students explore a field of interest and provides a close-up look at an occupation or industry to identify a career field or pathway and to start toward a career plan. Nassau County School District hosts Career Shadow Day, a focused way of allowing eighth grade students to visit a parent, family member, or trusted adult's workplace to learn about their career field.

**Mentoring** is a professional relationship in which an experienced person (mentor) assists another (mentee) in developing skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth. Mentoring can be used for both personal and professional development. For youth, mentoring can provide positive role models and help with career exploration.

Mentoring may be short- or long-term and be conducted in-person or online. The Osceola County School District participates in the ACE Mentor Program, which introduces high school students to mentors in architecture, construction, engineering, and related fields. On a biweekly basis, students and mentors meet to design hypothetical projects, and tour local construction and work sites.

Career Engagement (high school and post-secondary)

**Mentored Industry Project** is a series of activities which address a real-world, industry-focused question or problem and engage students in the in-depth, firsthand tasks required of a given career field. This can entail project-based, virtual, or simulated work-based learning and use the tools of industry, copy the scenarios faced on a worksite, or fully replicate a workplace environment with tools, scenarios, and workplace roles and responsibilities. In accordance with the definition of work-based learning opportunities in section 446.0915, *Florida Statutes*, the experience must involve interactions with industry or community professionals. SkillsUSA, a Career and Technical Student Organization that operates throughout Florida, offers students the ability to compete and receive industry feedback on career projects in 3D animation, additive manufacturing, advertising, automotive maintenance, cyber security, practical nursing, welding, and numerous other career fields.

**Mentored Entrepreneurship** is a student-led, instructor-supervised, entrepreneurial experience of the student's design that results in measurable outcomes within a predefined, agreed upon set of entrepreneurial standards and is aligned with the student's program of study. Student work may be conducted on or off campus. For example, Collier County Public Schools runs IncubatorEd, an entrepreneurship curriculum that connects students with entrepreneur mentors to help students experiment with running their own businesses.

**Service Learning** is an activity that integrates meaningful community service with classroom instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. For instance, the St. Johns Technical High School's Academy of Culinary Arts has partnered with Home Again St. Johns and Dining with Dignity to serve meals to individuals experiencing homelessness in the St. Augustine area.

**School-Based Enterprise** is a student-led simulated or actual business that offers goods or services on campus and builds employability, technical, business, and entrepreneurial skills. In 2021 Belleview High School in Marion County opened a branch of VyStar Credit Union on campus which is managed and staffed by students under the supervision of the school's career academy instructors. Participating students gain first-hand experience with financial services such as loans, credit cards, budgets, and investment accounts.

Career Experience (high school and post-secondary)

**Clinical/Practicum** is a highly structured, preceptor- or instructor-supervised work experience requiring learners to demonstrate mastery of career-related skills and meet the credit or non-credit criteria required for program completion or credentialing. Clinical and practicum activities are governed by program completion requirements and often State or Federal Regulating Agencies. Students in the Academy of Medical and Health Science at Hialeah Senior High School participate in at least 20 hours of long-term career clinical instruction at Hialeah Hospital, and Hialeah Shores Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

**Cooperative Education On-the-Job Training** is an intensive, paid career preparation experience where educators and employers collaborate to offer structured work experiences through which participants

acquire professional and technical skills. On-site work is paired with on-campus instructor-led instruction. The William T. Dwyer High School Academy of Finance offers their students a Finance Cooperative Education On-the-Job training opportunity with local business partners that serves as a capstone experience for their upper-class students.

**Internship** is a highly structured, time-limited, career training experience in which learners are placed at a worksite to observe and participate in work firsthand. Internships can be paid or unpaid. Can be truncated into a very short-term “micro-internship,” allowing for the possibility of multiple micro-internships to take place within a semester. Azimuth Technologies, a defense engineering company based in Florida, offers paid student internships through Collier County School district to roughly 10 to 15 students a summer. In these experiences, students help manufacture precision metal components.

**Registered Apprenticeship** is a formalized system of job processes which may be augmented by related instruction that provides the experience and knowledge necessary to meet the training objective of learning a specific skill, trade, or occupation. The training program must be at least 6 months and not more than 2 years in duration and must be registered with the department. Apprenticeships can be preceded by preapprenticeship on the job training, which is work experience accompanied by related technical instruction for youth and adults to become qualified to enter a registered apprenticeship program.

**Preapprenticeships** are defined as an organized course of instruction in the public school system or elsewhere, which course is designed to prepare a person 16 years of age or older to become an apprentice and which course is approved by and registered with the department and sponsored by a registered apprenticeship program<sup>5</sup>. Section 446.052, *Florida Statutes* establish the Florida Department of Education as the administration body for registered preapprenticeship programs. Through designated rulemaking authority, preapprenticeships are governed through established criteria and standards<sup>6</sup>. Some programs incorporate on-the-job training into the program while others focus on related technical instruction delivered in a classroom or laboratory setting. Brevard County Public Schools offers a preapprenticeship program that leads into the Space Coast Consortium Apprenticeship Program.

Florida currently has 60 Preapprenticeship programs of which 39 are exclusively designed for youth, with occupations ranging from surgical technologist to Industrial Manufacturing Technician. Youth pre-apprenticeships, typically accessed through schools, community colleges, community groups or associations, equip young adults with both technical and soft skills. These programs offer a structured blend of classroom instruction and hands-on training, mirroring the format of registered apprenticeships. Upon completion, participants are well-prepared to transition into advanced apprenticeship programs, possessing a foundational understanding of the industry and enhanced workplace readiness.

## WIOA Examples of Work-based Learning in Florida

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth funding plays a crucial role in helping youth access a wide range of programs and activities enabling young people to gain practical experience, explore career options, and develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce.

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<sup>5</sup> Fla. Stat. § 446.021(5) (2023)

<sup>6</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 6A-23.010. (2011).

The WIOA Youth program provides funding and support to help in-school youth aged 14-21 engage in work-based learning and gain valuable experience working for employers. Examples of WIOA funding can support youth with work-based learning includes:

**Summer Employment Programs** - WIOA funding can be used to create summer employment opportunities for in-school youth. These programs offer young people a chance to gain work experience during school breaks, helping them develop essential job skills.

21 of Florida's local workforce development boards held Summer Youth Employment programs in FY 2022-23 with nearly 7,000 students learning valuable job skills with employers. Students between 14 and 24 of age experienced an introduction to future career opportunities with employers from the public, private and nonprofit sectors across the state.

In the Orlando area, CareerSource Central Florida hosted a program for more than 1,200 students aged 15-19. With the option to choose from three five-week tracks, students spent time learning about a variety of careers, training or interning, with the potential for a longer placement in some cases.

**Paid and Unpaid Work Experience** - WIOA Youth allows for the provision of paid or unpaid work experience opportunities for young people. These experiences can be structured as internships, job shadowing, or apprenticeships, enabling youth to learn about various careers and industries.

Many local workforce development boards have paid internship experiences that provide youth with 12 weeks of paid internship experience with a local employer. The local workforce development board (or contracted provider) serves as the employer of record to hire and pay the youth, paying the taxes and worker's compensation so the employer has a no cost employee for 12 weeks. Employers have the option to hire an intern after the work experience.

CareerSource Capital Region partners with Leon County and Leon County Schools to provide paid work experiences for eligible youth as part of the Leon County Junior Apprentice Program. Leon County provides the work sites at county jobs in utilities, transportation, graphic design, and others to expose youth to various career paths.

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton provides WIOA Youth Participants with career counseling and a nine-module career readiness program through CareerEdge. They currently have six in school youth participating in paid work experience with local employers in manufacturing, IT and one in a fire station.

CareerSource Pinellas partners with the SailFuture Academy, serving disadvantaged teens to provide life skills through hands-on experience, focusing on the maritime, construction and culinary arts industries. CareerSource Pinellas provides funding to support paid work experiences and training opportunities.

**Preapprenticeships and Apprenticeships** - WIOA funding can be used to establish preapprenticeship and apprenticeship programs tailored to the needs of youth. WIOA supports such initiatives by connecting apprentices with employers, providing related technical instruction, and offering supportive services.

CareerSource Central Florida is working with Sumter County Schools to create a Horticultural, Irrigation and Landscaping Technician Preapprenticeship program in Sumter County that will lead into the Florida Nursery Growers Registered Apprenticeship. Students in existing Career and Technical Education

programs will work at local farms to gain work experience through CareerSource Central Florida's Summer Youth 5-week work experience program.

CareerSource South Florida partners with the Miami-Dade Youth Preapprenticeships program with Miami-Dade County Public Schools where they provide employment training, support services, tools, and uniforms for 35 students, with 13 later completing a paid internship in construction and 2 receiving the ASE Automotive certification. Students learn about these programs through various community outreach events by Youth Programs team and Youth Service Providers. In order to qualify, they confirm their eligibility using local WIOA Youth In-School and Out-of-School eligibility requirements.

CareerSource Brevard promotes the CommHit cybersecurity Preapprenticeship program with nine students graduating this December. CareerSource Brevard promotes preapprenticeships through job fairs, open houses and specialized job fairs.

**Career Exploration** - WIOA-funded programs can offer career exploration activities, such as career fairs, industry tours, and job-related workshops. These activities expose youth to different career pathways and help them make informed decisions about their future.

Initiatives like Get There and Future of Work Florida, in collaboration with the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Chamber, and CareerSource Florida, aim to amplify the message about the value of Career and Technical Education and its work-based learning opportunities for lucrative, in-demand careers.

The innovative career readiness platform, Xello, is a key proponent of these efforts, enabling students to develop professional profiles, search for work-based learning opportunities, and explore career paths. Integrating work-based learning opportunities into Xello, enhances awareness and underscores the importance of work-based learning in shaping successful careers, aligning students, parents, and businesses with the rich opportunities offered by Career and Technical Education.

CareerSource Palm Beach County partners with the Marine Industries Association of Palm Beach County and the School District of Palm Beach County to bus 50 -70 high school students to meet with marine industry employers and learn about career opportunities in the local marine industry.

CareerSource Capital Region recently partnered with the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce to put on the Worlds of Work career showcase which exposed over 2,000 high school students to careers in a variety of industries including healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and IT and professional services.

CareerSource Chipola offers a comprehensive 14-week course that is designed to enhance self-awareness, explore career interests, and gain insights into the local job market. The primary audience comprises high school graduates transitioning directly into the workforce, especially those not pursuing college education. Additionally, we provide guidance on short-term training opportunities to enhance earning potential.

**Job Shadowing** - Funding can be used to facilitate job shadowing experiences.

**Supportive Services** - WIOA provides funding for supportive services, such as transportation, childcare, and work attire. These services remove barriers that may prevent youth from participating in work-based learning opportunities.

**Adult Mentoring and Coaching** - Youth can benefit from adult mentors who provide guidance, share their work experiences, and offer advice on career development. WIOA funds can be allocated to mentorship programs that connect students with professionals in their chosen fields.

**Academic and Career Counseling** - Funding can support academic and career counseling services in schools. Counselors can help students identify work-based learning opportunities, set career goals, and develop the skills needed for employment.

**Entrepreneurial Skills Training** - Some youth may be interested in entrepreneurship. WIOA funding can be used to provide training in entrepreneurial skills, helping students explore the possibilities of starting their own businesses.

#### WIOA In-School Youth Eligibility

To participate in the WIOA Youth program, in-school youth must meet the following eligibility criteria established in federal law and state policy<sup>78</sup>.

- Be attending school, including secondary or postsecondary education;
- Be not younger than age 14 and not older than age 21 (unless an individual with a disability who is attending school under state law) at the time of enrollment;
- Be a low-income individual; and
- Meet one or more of the following eligibility barriers:
  1. Basic skills deficient.
  2. An English language learner.
  3. An offender.
  4. A homeless individual or a runaway.
  5. An individual in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act, or in an out-of-home placement.
  6. An individual who is pregnant or parenting.
  7. An individual with a disability.
  8. An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

#### Other Relevant WIOA Youth Criteria

A minimum of 75 percent of WIOA Youth funds is required to be spent on out-of-school youth. This expenditure requirement applies to local workforce development area funds and funds reserved by the Governor.

Florida is currently operating under a federal waiver to this requirement and may spend 50% of funds on in-school youth. This federal waiver further allows WIOA Youth funds to be spent on individual training accounts for in-school youth allowing further support of apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs for related technical instruction components.

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<sup>7</sup> *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*, 29 U.S.C. § 3164 (a)(1) (2014).

<sup>8</sup> *Youth Program Eligibility*. Administrative Policy Number 095. CareerSource Florida. 25 April 2017.

WIOA prioritizes work experience for youth by requiring that local workforce development boards maintain a minimum 20% expenditure rate on the work experience element of the program.

## Florida Work-based Learning Requirements for Middle and High School

Florida law does not require students to **complete** work-based learning to graduate high school or to be promoted from middle to high school; however, legislation has been enacted to help strengthen Florida students' opportunities for work-based learning.

SB 240, passed in 2023 made widespread changes to Florida Law to provide awareness and access to work-based learning for middle and high school students. First, the legislation requires each district school board to provide all students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 with access to at least one work-based learning opportunity before graduation. Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, each district school board must adopt policies and procedures to require each high school to host an annual career fair during the school year and establish a process to provide students in grades 11 and 12 the opportunity to meet or interview with potential employers during the career fair.

The legislation amended the requirements for middle school promotion and encourages the student to access and update their academic and career plan at least annually as the student progresses through middle school and high school. It also requires a middle grade student's personalized academic and career plan to include information on the career and technical education graduation pathway option and work-based learning opportunities.

Further district school board are required to draft policies to include procedures for a parent or guardian and the student to learn about workforce education options for students, such as apprenticeships and preapprenticeships, diversified education, Career and Technical Education courses and programs, career and technical student organizations (Career and Technical Education student organizations), and industry certifications, and the costs and benefits of Career and Technical Education in comparison to other postsecondary pathways.

District school boards are required to enable a student who, in middle school, completed a Career and Technical Education course or an industry certification included in the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List to continue a sequential program of Career and Technical Education in the same concentration, if a high school in the district offers the program.

Lastly, to strengthen the connection between industry and education, the legislation requires each local workforce development board to create an education and industry consortium composed of educational entities and business in the area. The consortium should provide community-based information related to educational programs and industry needs to assist the local board in making decisions on programs, services, and partnerships.

## Florida Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education coursework provides access to industry certifications and essential skills for workforce development. As part of the Florida Department of Education's 2023-24 Career and Technical Education Curriculum Framework, students in middle school and high school have the opportunity to take courses aligned to one of 17 career clusters. Career clusters include:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communication
- Business, Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Energy
- Engineering & Technology Education
- Finance
- Government & Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety & Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing, Sales & Service
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

At the high school level, students are able to earn a high school diploma through the Career and Technical pathway option by meeting the following criteria:

- Successfully complete a minimum of 18 credits.
- Have a minimum, cumulative GPA of at least a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Meet the requirements of
  - 4 English credits (including the statewide grade 10 Reading assessment or the grade 10 ELA assessment, or earn a concordant score)
  - 4 Math credits (including the statewide Algebra I EOC assessment, or earn a comparative score)
  - 3 Science credits
  - 3 Social studies credits
- Complete two credits in career and technical education. The courses must result in a program completion and an industry certification.
- Complete two credits in work-based learning programs. A student may substitute up to two credits of electives, including one-half credit in financial literacy, for work-based learning program courses to fulfill this requirement.

Florida law requires each district school board to incorporate the Career and Technical Education pathway option into the student progression plan.<sup>9</sup>

During the 2021-22 school year 799,150 students were enrolled in Career and Technical Education courses and 202,130 students were considered concentrators by taking two courses in the same program of study.

While Career and Technical Education course instruction is integral to work-based learning and it is the state's best interest to continue to grow the number of students taking Career and Technical Education classes, it is important to note that not all Career and Technical Education courses are considered work-

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<sup>9</sup> Fla. Stat. § 1003.4282 (9)(b) (2023).



based learning. This is because not all coursework includes a hands-on work component and some classes may just be general education in a specific field of study.

## Florida Work-based Learning Data and State Initiatives

### Data Collection

Data collection for work-based learning is difficult due to the fact that it is inherently locally driven and not required to be tracked by school districts; however, the Florida Department of Education has initiated tracking of work-based learning enrollment as well as calculating the percent of students that have completed a work-based learning course by time of graduation. In the 2021-22 school year, 69,690 students in Florida completed a work-based learning course. There is significant work-based learning course participation variability between districts as well as schools. During 2021-22 some Florida county school districts had as much as 81.4% of their students complete a work-based learning course before time of graduation, while other counties had as little as 3.1% completion.

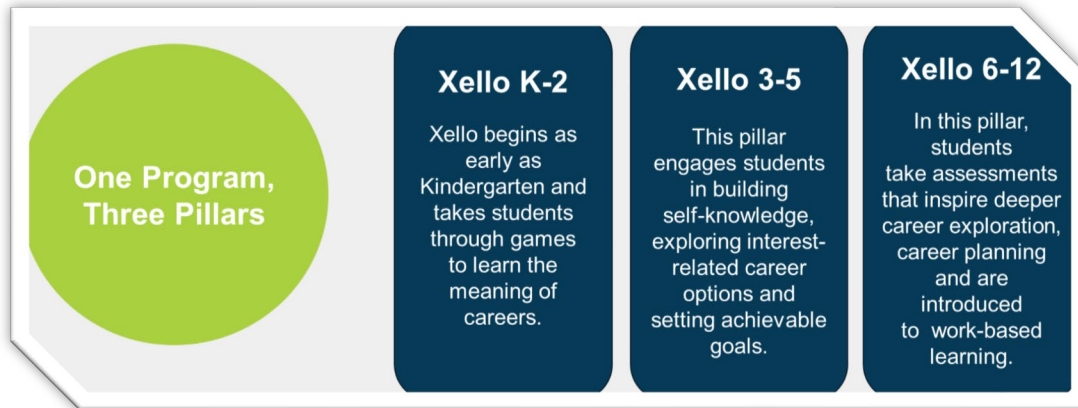
The method used to measure work-based learning participation here draws upon the official list of work-based learning courses used for the 18-credit Career and Technical Education High School Diploma Option and does not capture work-based learning optionally embedded in Career and Technical Education courses that is not reported to the state nor cocurricular or extracurricular work-based learning.

### State Initiatives

The Florida Department of Education has competitively procured and subsequently launched a legislatively funded Career Planning and Work-Based Learning Coordination System (Xello). This system is available at no cost to all Florida school districts and charter schools and, in addition to extensive career and postsecondary planning functionality, is now being used as a work-based learning site with tools for students to create resumes and professional portfolios, take career readiness lessons, track work and volunteer hours, assess student skill development, survey employer satisfaction, manage forms and templates, and a number of other capabilities to support work-based learning quality.

Additionally, the system will allow local educators to develop a database and network of local employers that are willing to offer a wide variety of work-based learning opportunities. These opportunities will be connected to student career assessment results and serve as a driver of student work-based learning participation as well as raise awareness of opportunities that educators would, otherwise, be unaware of. In addition, the system supports the entire process of work-based learning – from forming the skill development objectives in a training agreement to keeping track of hours worked to assessment student outcomes and surveying employer satisfaction, and many other aspects of the experience.

Since Xello's launch this year, over 1,000,000 Florida students are in the system and over 5,000 Florida educators have been trained on how to use the system.



### Manual and Toolkit

In collaboration with a wide base of stakeholders, the Florida Department of Education has produced a Work-based Learning Manual, Work-Based Learning Quality Framework and Needs Assessment, and a number of templates to support the implementation of work-based learning, including a training agreement and plan, skill assessment, student reflection, employer satisfaction survey, and timesheet.

### Professional Development

To support the professional development of educators, the Florida Department of Education offers technical assistance through conference presentations and webinars. Recent topics include student employability skill development, safety and Child Labor Laws, work-based learning intermediaries, developing on- and off-campus work-based learning, and providing accommodations for students with disabilities to participate in work-based learning.

### Funding

**Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program** provide grants to high schools, career centers, charter technical career centers, Florida College System institutions, and other entities authorized to sponsor an apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program to establish, expand, and operate new and existing apprenticeship or preapprenticeship programs<sup>10</sup>. The program is designed to address statewide or regional demand that addresses a critical statewide or regional shortage; or expands existing programs that exceed the median completion rate and employment rate one year after completion of similar programs in the region, or the state if there are no similar programs in the region.

Funds may be used to fund the cost of providing:

- Related technical instruction,
- Instructional equipment,
- Supplies,
- Instructional personnel,
- Student services, and
- Other expenses associated with the creation, expansion, or operation of an apprenticeship program.

<sup>10</sup> Fla. Stat. § 220.198 (2023).

**Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program** provides grants to school districts and Florida College System institutions to fund some, or all of the costs associated with the creation or expansion of career and technical education programs that lead to industry certifications included on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List<sup>11</sup>. The programs may serve secondary students or postsecondary students if the postsecondary career and technical education program also serves secondary students.

Funds may be used for

- Instructional equipment,
- Laboratory equipment,
- Supplies,
- Personnel,
- Student services, or
- Other expenses associated with the creation or expansion of a career and technical education program that serves secondary students.

Expansion of a program may include either the expansion of enrollments in a program or expansion into new areas of specialization within a program. No grant funds may be used for recurring instructional costs or for institutions' indirect costs.

At the time of this report, the Florida Department of Education was in the closing stages of reviewing the first round of competitive grant applications and finalizing awards.

**Career and Technical Student Organizations** are cocurricular and extracurricular organizations that develop student career readiness through activities such as industry projects completed in collaboration with businesses, often in a student competition setting. These activities are financially supported through Perkins Leadership funds, local funds, as well as local membership dues.

Work-based learning that takes place through dedicated courses, like those used to meet the work-based learning requirements of the 18-credit Career and Technical Education High School Diploma Option, are provided funding through the **Florida Education Finance Program**.

## Work-based Learning Challenges and Best Practices in Other States

Data collection can be an onerous process and it can be tempting to want to ease reporting requirements for schools and school districts; however, it is necessary to measure what matters. Given the importance that Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature have placed upon Career and Technical Education and work-based learning for students, the reporting and accountability requirements of the state only partially – not fully – reflect that. When examining best practices for work-based learning in other states, it is clear that quality data enabled these states to design and implement meaningful policies to encourage the growth of work-based learning. Moreover, the continued collection of data allows these states to determine if the policies enacted are effective. Therefore, serious consideration needs to be given to increasing reporting requirements for what are final career-focused outcomes for students, in lieu of other reporting that is more input-focused.

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<sup>11</sup> Fla. Stat. § 1101.801 (2023).

## Tennessee

The Tennessee Department of Education created two portals specific to work-based learning programs that serve as a data collection hub for various metrics. The Work-Based Learning Student Placement Portal was launched during the 2016-17 academic year and is a mandatory reporting portal where work-based learning programs submit data on student participation and outcomes<sup>12</sup>. This portal is embedded within the Tennessee Department of Education's website and collects data from the district-level.

The Work-Based Learning Student Exit Survey was launched in the same year but collects data from students directly, informing the state's Department of Education of specific work-based learning student placement opportunities statewide, the duration of placement, nature of the placement, and outcomes. Both portals also indicate which local education agencies and/or areas of the state outperform others and why and showcase which employers are most involved. The collection of local education agency and/or regional work-based learning program performance enables the Department of Education to understand how best practices can be leveraged to successfully implement strategies and build capacity for work-based learning programs statewide. Employment involvement data empowers the state's Department of Education to expand and target collaboration efforts by incorporating engaged industries in the development of curricula to meet forecasted workforce demands.

Furthermore, the Tennessee Department of Education requires school districts to document credit-bearing work-based learning experiences and standard attainment as well as the collection and submission of data on both activities and assessment results. Work-based learning experiences that award students Career and Technical Education elective credit or general credits must also be reported through the Career and Technical Education data management system for compliance under Perkins IV. Enrollment, standard attainment, and credits awarded are tracked through this system.

Ultimately, these reports inform the Tennessee Department of Education of enrollment numbers, demographic breakdowns, gaps in services, and continuing education outcomes. When disaggregated, the data provides information on identified barriers and assists the Department of Education in considering policy changes to alleviate these challenges<sup>13</sup>.

## Washington

Career Connect Washington (CCW) is a statewide coalition of leaders, committed to expanding access to work-based learning opportunities. CCW established the Career Connected Learning Initiative, a dedicated state funding and policy framework, which is designed to support a statewide work-based learning program. This Initiative was funded through the Workforce Education and Investment Act and has provided \$46 million in state operating and capital funding since its passage in 2019.

The Career Explore, Prep, and Launch Programs were born out of the Career Connected Learning Initiative creating a part of a three-step work-based learning program for high school students. Career

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<sup>12</sup> Tennessee Department of Education. Division of College, Career & Technical Education. *Step-by-Step Guide to the WBL Student Placement Portal*. Pgs. 3-6. March 2019.

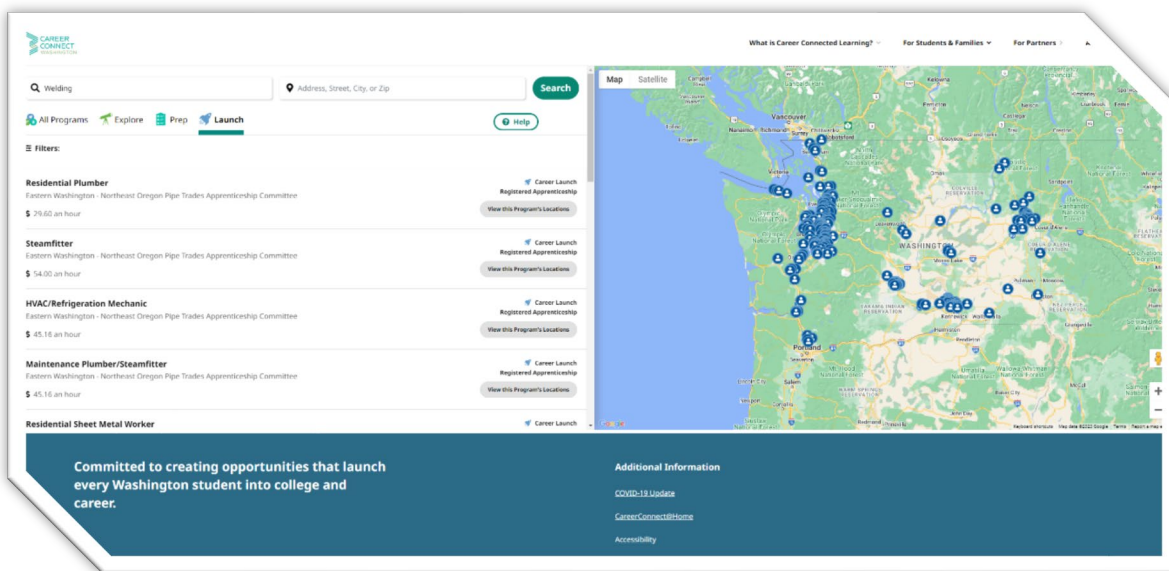
[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/wbl/wbl\\_portal\\_guide.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/wbl/wbl_portal_guide.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Stinson, Cassie. Office of the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury. *CTE Interactive Data Dashboard*. July 2023. <https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiMjQyZGNjOTgtOWE1OS00MDM1LTg2OWYtNmE5OWM0NGJjY2EzliwidCI6IjVlMmQ4LTBmMGUtNDkwNS1hY2M5LTczNTFmODUwNmZmNiJ9>

Launch is a comprehensive program that is designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and the practical knowledge and specific skills needed to enter the workforce<sup>14</sup>. It offers:

- Classroom instruction aligned to industry/academic standards (Career and Technical Education Graduation Pathways)
- Meaningful work experience (paid internships or registered apprenticeships)
- A valuable credential beyond high school (Industry Recognized Credential or college certificate)

Washington state has established a goal in which 60% of all young adults (aged 16-30) will have participated in a Career Launch program by 2030. According to its annual report to the Legislature, since the launch of Career Connect Washington, over 14,500 students have enrolled of which, 12,700 are in registered apprenticeships, over 150 businesses are employing students, and over 100 programs have been created including 33 registered apprenticeships<sup>15</sup>. Additionally, the state launched an online directory where students can search for available opportunities<sup>16</sup>.



### State Analysis Conclusion

While these two states discovered unique challenges to work-based learning programs, one thing is common – the presence of data. The collection of meaningful data is paramount to addressing challenges at local and state levels and to ensure high quality work-based learning opportunities are readily available to all Florida middle and high school students. Data-driven policy is key to ensuring Florida achieves the mission of being the #1 state for workforce education by 2030.

<sup>14</sup>Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/career-technical-education-cte/cte-resources-essentials/career-connect-washington>

<sup>15</sup> Career Connect Washington Task Force. *Career Connect Washington Annual Progress Report*. September 2022. <https://careerconnectwa.org/2022-career-connect-washington-progress-report/>

<sup>16</sup> Career Connect Washington. 2023. <https://careerconnectwa.org/directory/>

## Challenges and Best Practices of Work-based Learning in Florida

The Florida Department of Education has identified multiple challenges to the implementation of work-based learning; however, many school districts, counties, and educational institutions are utilizing creative solutions to advance work-based learning throughout the state. While new funding may not be necessary to achieve best practices, a better prioritization and use of existing funds is necessary.

**Transportation** - State funding for public school transportation under section 1011.68, *Florida Statutes*, does not include transportation to worksites for work-based learning. While many districts cover transportation expenses for getting students to worksites with local dollars, this can be a hardship in rural and economically disadvantaged areas.

One way to address this challenge is to provide on-campus work-based learning opportunities. For example, Broward County School District hires students to complete paid work on school campuses related to preparing food in the cafeteria, servicing school HVAC systems and providing audio/visual services. St. Lucie County Public Schools integrates virtual reality into their Career and Technical Education for auto repair, medical anatomy and 3D modeling for manufacturing. Career and Technical Student Organizations engage students in industry-focused, problem-based student competitions. Simulated work environments immerse students into the roles, responsibilities and integrate the tools of a true worksite.

Additionally, finding creative ways to fund transportation can help overcome this barrier. Broward College subsidizes transportation costs to clinical work-based learning sites through a partnership with Lyft, which provides a \$100 credit for travel.

**Staffing** - Schools do not traditionally operate in a flexible way to allow enough staffing capacity to coordinate work-based learning for all students. In order to address this, school districts can better utilize resources provided by the state and local entities. For example, the Florida Department of Education has nine Apprenticeship Training Representatives spread across the state to provide technical assistance and support to employers wishing to establish and grow local apprenticeship programs.

Collier County Public Schools has two full-time staff that focus on work-based learning. One staff person is employed by The Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce and focuses on business recruitment and engagement for the school district. This position is funded by Chamber membership dues and grant dollars. Additionally, the district has one full-time staff member that focuses on supporting the students and teachers involved in work-based learning.

The Sarasota Chamber of Commerce operates CareerEdge Funders Collaborative, a workforce development initiative that, among other activities, coordinates work-based learning through the Bridges to Careers Program. One 12-week program provides tuition free training for high school seniors in Marine Tech Servicing through a partnership with Suncoast Technical College and a local boat manufacturer.

Broward County Public Schools collaborates with a coalition of workforce and philanthropic partners to operate Talent Forge, an organization that coordinates local work-based learning. One program offered is the LiftOff Internship Program which offers a six-week paid work-based learning experiences for rising

high seniors that are enrolled in a Career-Themed Academy or a Career and Technical Education Program.

**Accountability and Requirements** - Definitions of student career readiness used for accountability and program completion requirements do not include work-based learning participation. Measures for work-based learning as a component of career readiness can be defined and utilized at the local level. Sarasota County School District builds career readiness into their Student Progression Plan by defining requirements that all high school students must achieve by time of graduation. Local data is tracked at the school level to ensure that all students have completed at least three of the following:

1. Complete two or more credits within a single Career and Technical Education program.
2. Earn an industry-recognized certification.
3. Earn the Florida Ready to Work credential.
4. Complete a work-based learning experience.
5. Participate in a Career & Technical Student Organization.
6. Earn two or more Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) credits.
7. Earn a passing score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).

These formal definitions of what it means to be 'career ready' focus local programming efforts as well as hold principals and the superintendent accountable for student career readiness outcomes.

**Professional Employer Organizations** – Employers are reluctant to offer work-based learning because of liability concerns and paperwork burdens. Small businesses, especially, may not have the staff, training, or resources to handle the temporary employment of students. One way to encourage work-based learning is through the use of Professional Employer Organizations (PEO). A PEO can relieve a business from the following burdens<sup>17</sup>:

- Benefits administration.
- Recruiting and hiring.
- Payroll administration.
- Unemployment compensation insurance.
- Workers' compensation administration.
- Compliance assistance.
- Drug testing programs.
- Family and Medical Leave Act administration.
- Onboarding student interns.

A small but growing number of school districts in Florida, including Orange County School District and Broward County School District, contract with a PEO to serve as the employer of record and provide human resource services. Outsourcing paperwork and technical knowledge to a PEO can make offering a work-based learning opportunity more streamlined for employers and allow them to focus on the skill development and productivity of the student.

The Miami-Dade County School District serves as the employer of record for their Summer Youth Internship Program. The district provides payroll, ensures student insurance coverage and offers other

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<sup>17</sup> Florida Council of 100. *Beyond the Classroom: Expanding Postsecondary Internships and Other Forms of Experiential Learning*. February 2023. [https://fc100.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FCO-Expanding-Postsecondary-Final\\_2-2-23-2.pdf](https://fc100.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FCO-Expanding-Postsecondary-Final_2-2-23-2.pdf)

human resources services. During the summer of 2023, Miami-Dade County School District, in collaboration with numerous other partners, raised \$4.7 million to fund stipends for 3,060 students working at 705 employers. In addition, 473 of these students earned dual enrollment credit through Miami-Dade College and Florida International University.

**Work-Based Learning Breadth and Depth** - The student’s experience of work-based learning is limited in scope and/or is disconnected from the student’s career pathway. Career pathway alignment is needed. While internships are the most common form of work-based learning, a continuum of opportunities are available that vary in duration, the extent to which the student is engaged in first-hand work, compensation and where the experience is taking place. Extended experiences, like pre-apprenticeships and cooperative education on-the-job training, offer depth, while other experiences, like job shadowing, service learning, “micro internships,” informational interviews, guest speakers and career fairs allow for breadth and can expose students to a wide variety of industries and employers. Both strategies – providing depth and breadth – have merit in facilitating student skill development and career exploration.

Additionally, educators should strive to embed opportunities representative of the full continuum of work-based learning throughout students’ educational experience – even down into elementary school. Putnam County School District models this approach through their STEM programming during elementary grades with makerspaces, afterschool STEM clubs, computer coding curriculum, hydroponics gardening and a mobile STEM van that visits school locations.

**Educator/Employer Relationships** - Educators have limited breadth and depth of relationships with employers. Data technology and structured, collaborative work-based learning leadership can aid educators in their endeavors to form relationships with employers.

Senate Bill 2500, signed by Governor DeSantis on June 15, 2023, appropriated funds for Florida’s Career Planning and Work-Based Learning Coordination System. In addition to becoming an essential part of middle school students personalized academic and career plan to be updated yearly until graduation, this system provides means for educators to develop a database of employers, contacts and work-based learning opportunities available to students. Having this type of database to record, track and support work-based learning quality accrues value with time and allows institutional knowledge of employers and work-based learning opportunities to endure beyond local educator turnover.

Section 446.045, *Florida Statutes*, established the State Apprenticeship Advisory Council to provide input to the Florida Department of Education on matters relating to Registered Apprenticeships. This gives a formalized method for employers to give voice to the policies, procedures and programming that affect their apprenticeships. At the local level, it is common practice for districts and colleges to operate advisory councils that may oversee career and technical education as well as work-based learning at the school, program or Career Cluster level. As one example, Pinellas County School District runs a “Academies of Distinction” program for their career academies that provides additional program funding if certain criteria are met, including operating an advisory council.

**Class Time Limitations** - Students have a finite number of class periods and school hours, and work-based learning often gets overshadowed by other legitimate graduation, remediation, enrichment, and acceleration needs. Work-based learning programs offered at alternate times such as after school or during the summer may help alleviate this challenge.



There are a number of school districts across Florida that operate after-school programs that connect students to hands-on experiences in collaboration with industry professionals. For example, Junior Achievement operates both cocurricular and after-school programming that supports student career exploration, planning, and readiness. Junior Achievement operates in Broward County Public Schools where all fifth-grade students are immersed in a mock business complex where they learn financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and work readiness skills. All eighth-grade students in Broward visit Junior Achievements JA Finance Park, where students earn a pretend salary, learn how to balance a budget, discover career pathways, and develop work readiness skills.

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are also either operated cocurricular during class time or as an after-school organization. CTSOs, like Future Farmers of America (FFA), engages students in career, leadership, and agriscience competitions hosted at the state and national level. STEM programming, like those operated through Project Lead the Way or the Boys and Girls Club, engage students in projects that simulate industry scenarios found in engineering, computer science, or other fields and ask the students to collaborate, problem solve, and develop novel industry solutions.

Miami-Dade County along with the school district offers an afterschool internship program which places junior and seniors in high school within departments of the local government. This non-paid internship offers high school credit while interns will participate in activities that may include presentations, research projects, program design and everyday shadowing of professionals.

In many areas around the state, the summertime offers many work-based learning opportunities due to students' greater degree of scheduling flexibility. These camps provide students with hands-on experiences alongside employers from a variety of industries.

For middle school students, several Florida State College Institutions offer career exploration summer camps. Pasco Hernando State College offers a one-week Crime Scene/Forensics camp for rising 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Students work with forensic instructors and academic personnel to learn about crime scene investigations, photography, spatial reasoning, and problem-solving.

North Florida College operates the STEM SEALs Summer Institute which is an immersive one-week STEM camp for middle school students. Students are introduced to robotics, microprocessors, coding, sensors, actuators, and electrical circuitry through building a land rover capable of autonomous navigation and remote-controlled operation. The college also offers a one-week camp for 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders to explore industrial machinery. The campers get hands-on experience in working with electric motors, hydraulics, machining, and welding.

Indian River State College operate several career exploration summer camps for middle school and high school students. Camp offerings explore many industries including public service, workforce education, advanced technology, digital media, and health sciences. Students will leave the multi-week camps with an increased awareness that will aid them in choosing a career.

## Additional Recommendations

### **Create an advisory panel to inform middle and high school work-based learning.**

The importance of collaboration between education and industry to grow meaningful work-based learning opportunities for students cannot be overstated. Creating advisory groups at the state,

regional, or local level will ensure the focus remains on improving these experiences for students and create a space for problem solving.

**Require Florida school districts to review high school bell schedules to more closely align with local college course offerings.**

This practice has been found to be successful in other states and would allow students more access to work-based learning opportunities.

**Require parents and guardians to acknowledge receipt of the student's academic and career plan and an opportunity to review courses for which career and academic planning may be embedded.**

While students are being provided valuable information around their academic and career plan, ensuring that parents and guardians are part of the conversation is vital. SB 240 provides for greater parental notification of career pathway options, however ensuring that parents and guardians are engaged in the review of the child's plan is a potential next step.

**Require school districts to report data on work-based learning opportunities provided to students to the Florida Department of Education.**

As seen in other states, data collection around work-based learning has proven useful in developing increased opportunities for all students. Lacking or inconsistent data makes it challenging to assess the effectiveness of work-based learning opportunities that are currently required to be provided to students.