



BUSINESS PARTNER HANDBOOK

Mission

The mission of the Work-Based Learning Program is to assist in providing a highly trained, technologically sophisticated, and career-oriented young workforce. This is accomplished by developing partnerships between business, industry, students, parents, school systems, coordinators, and post-secondary institutions which will lead the participating student into meaningful careers.

Goals

- Assist in the creation of a strong support structure and partnerships between local employers, secondary schools, and technical schools, colleges, and certified training programs.
- Create an industry-driven system where employers and their representatives help set the standard for occupational skills, collaborate on curriculum, provide work experience and workplace mentors for students, and certify mastery of skills leading to the award of a skill certificate.
- Focus student learning on a broad industry cluster rather than mastering a narrow set of occupational skills.
- Provide assistance in the articulation of programs of study between high schools and post-secondary institutions.

BENEFITS OF SCHOOL-TO-CAREER PROGRAMS

- Effective work-based learning programs provide a wide range of specific benefits to students, employers, educational institutions, and the community.

A work-based learning program can benefit participating students by:

- Providing opportunities to apply academic proficiencies.
- Establishing a clear connection between education and work.
- Increasing motivation and retention by showing the relevance of academic and occupational instruction.
- Providing opportunities to explore possible careers and enhancing skill development.
- Improving post-graduation job prospects and establishing future employment contacts.
- Developing workplace responsibility and positive work habits and attitudes.
- Providing opportunities for leadership development.
- Providing opportunities to develop relationships with adults outside of education.
- Encouraging completion of secondary education and enrollment in post-secondary education.
- Helping develop an understanding of the workplace.

A work-based learning program can benefit participating employers by:

- Providing an opportunity to prepare future employees.
- Offering opportunities to provide community services.
- Access to a perpetual source of skilled and motivated future employees.
- Reducing the cost of recruitment and training.
- Improving employee retention.
- Encouraging involvement in the curriculum development process which provides a customized employee experience through providing the opportunity to communicate to educational personnel any job-specific proficiencies that are required for success in the job placement and industry.
- Increasing employer visibility in education/community.

Work-based learning programs can benefit the local community by:

- Providing an informed, competent, and productive future workplace.
- Ensuring cooperation and understanding between education, business, and the community.
- Enhancing awareness of local employment opportunities.
- Building the foundation for a more productive local economy.

We look forward to working with you as our partner in giving these students a head start in the working world by offering them a unique opportunity to gain some valuable experience in their chosen career field.

WORKPLACE MENTOR

The success of the Work-Based Learning program is primarily based on the quality of the placement of the student in a business and the instruction that the student receives as part of the work-based learning segment of the as a supplement to their curriculum. A key individual in the work-based learning is the designated mentor.

An integral part of the work-based learning program is a supportive adult, referred to as a mentor, who is linked with the student learner. A mentor provides guidance and encouragement to the youth apprentice as well as being involved in the teaching of work-related tasks and job responsibilities to the student.

One individual in a business is usually designated as the mentor but there may be many different individuals involved in teaching a youth apprentice depending upon the size of the business. The selection of the mentor is the prerogative of the business. However, an effective mentor must possess both the personal qualities and the technical competence to be successful. In addition, it is important for the business to provide time for the mentor to work with the apprentice on a one-to-one basis.

Personal Qualities

A good mentor is one who is interested in young people. A mentor must know and perform their job well and be willing to share their knowledge. They should understand human relationships and possess the character which the student will want to emulate.

Role of the Mentor

- Perform several functions including induction of the student into the business, training of the student, evaluation of the student, and counseling the student on matters related to work and school.

Induction:

- The mentor orients the student to their job and to the business and industry.

Training:

The mentor participates in the development of the training plan for the student under their supervision.

- The mentor assists the student in carrying out classroom assignments related to their job and evaluates the skill tasks listed on the student's schedule of training.

Evaluation

- The mentor evaluates the student's progress in learning their job and communicates with the work-based learning coordinator any areas in which improvement is needed.
- The mentor verifies the student's attendance and production reports.

Counseling

- The mentor counsels with the student concerning their performance on-the-job as well as with their relationships with other employees.
- The mentor is responsible for working with the student toward the goals and tasks identified in the training plan .

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE MENTORING

POSITIVE ATTITUDE: Encourage a person to examine beliefs and ideals to establish personal values and goals. OPEN-MINDEDNESS: Encourage a person to keep an open mind to ideas.

INTERRELATIONS: The interactions between mentor and mentee should be situations of sharing, caring, and empathizing.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING: Encourage the mentee to use a creative problem-solving process. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS: Encourage a person to be an attentive listener and an assertive questioner.

DISCOVERY: Encourage the mentee to be an independent thinker.

STRENGTHS AND UNIQUENESS: Encourage a person to recognize individual strengths and uniqueness and to build upon them.

CONFIDENCE: Assist a person in developing self-confidence.

AWARENESS: Stress that an individual must be aware of the environment, be intuitive, be problem-sensitive, and be ready to make the most of opportunities.

RISK-TAKING: Encourage a person to be a risk-taker and to be an active participant, not a spectator.

FLEXIBILITY: Share with a mentee the importance of being flexible and adaptable in attitudes and actions, looking for alternatives, and seeing situations/persons from different perspectives (diversity)

