



Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council Guidelines for

STEM BEST® Businesses Engaging Students and Teachers

WORK BASED LEARNING (WBL)

Career related education provides age-appropriate experiences which prepare students for future work based learning experiences, including college and career programs of many levels and types. It is appropriate to think about career awareness and related instruction for younger students as a preparatory step to career education which often is formalized and even mandated by school code during the middle school years.

Structured and authentic learning experiences: High-quality work-based learning (WBL) consists of structured learning opportunities through authentic work experiences, including hands-on projects, internships, externships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships-focused on high-demand fields. WBL should help students gain understanding of the career-related value of their education, acquire knowledge in a meaningful way, and improve skills and self-confidence. Students in high school must be able to earn credits and/or industry-recognized credentials.

School-business partnerships scale up WBL over time: High-quality WBL should build on a continuum of career awareness, exploration, preparation, and education/training activities that are interconnected. WBL experiences should be sustained through active involvement and guidance from industry professionals in real workplace settings or simulated workplace scenarios.

Clear work-based learning partnership agreement and value for all participants: Partnerships should add value for all participants, including improving academic achievement, and furthering success in post-secondary education and careers. Formal agreements between various participants delineate roles, responsibilities, and required and expected outcomes. Student work plans should clearly identify targeted skills and how skill competencies will be measured.

High-quality WBL is student centered and includes critical partners across the education and training spectrum. It focuses on continuous improvement and sharing of best practices. High-quality WBL incorporates industry and other partner resources – including a cost-share component – and includes a sustainability plan.

[Adapted for Iowa from “*Defining High Quality Work-Based Learning in Iowa*,” a product of the National Governors Association Work-Based Learning Policy Academy grant Core Team, Feb. 15, 2017.]