

# WORK-BASED LEARNING MANUAL



Montana Office of Public Instruction

Career, Technical, and Adult Education Unit

Revised, January 2023

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Work-based learning is an important part of education:

- It can provide the relevancy of information learned as well as assist with the knowledge and skills necessary in selecting a career.
- Many businesses, agencies, and institutions offer work-based learning experiences, be they from the hosting site, being part of planning teams within state agencies, preparing the workforce through post-secondary institutions or offering foundational education and training through high school career and technical education programs.
- The outcome is the same—provide work related experiences which will promote the selection of a career that fits their aptitudes and interests, along with meeting the workforce needs of Montana.

This manual was developed to indicate how to combine efforts, focusing on the student experience at the secondary level. Note, after the forward section, there are two sections:

- Section I--Focuses on a general understanding of work-based learning.
- Section II-- Focuses on additional information when work-based learning is part of an approved CTE program.

A [work-based google folder](#) accompanies this manual for sample forms and documents.

- The file is fluid and ever changing as best practices and resources are shared for inclusion.
- With that in mind, continually revisit to assist with your work-based learning efforts.

The manual ends with resources to extend the support to work-based learning efforts.

## **FORWARD:**

### **Purpose of this Manual**

This manual was developed to serve as a guide for meeting the Montana vision for work-based learning, but also as a resource for secondary staff initiating, coordinating, or improving work-based learning.

This document can be helpful to a variety of people who are interested in increasing their knowledge and understanding of work-based learning including:

- Instructors
- Program administrators
- School counselors
- CTE coordinators
- Support personnel
- Employers
- Community partners

There are four objectives addressed in this guidance document:

- To define work-based learning and its benefits to a student's personalized career plan
- To be a detailed reference for districts developing Work-based Learning programs
- To be a comprehensive resource for individuals already involved in providing Work-based Learning programs
- To share considerations and planning required of schools when aligning Work-based Learning through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

### **The Role of WIOA and Carl D Perkins V in Work-based Learning**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (called WIOA) and Carl D. Perkins V (called Perkins or Perkins V) federal legislation challenge the state to combine resources and create partnerships and look to labor market information (LMI) and industry research to develop education and training programs that meet the expectations of the future economy.

Montana's Department of Labor & Industry (DLI), Montana's University System, and Montana's K-12 education system have established partnerships and are creating a foundation for implementing Perkins V and growing successful strategies established through WIOA.

### **1. Montana's WIOA Combined State Plan**

The [WIOA Combined State Plan](#) builds from the groundwork currently in place and aims to further develop a talent development system that enhances training, education, and services available to Montana's current and future workforce. Over the coming years, the state of Montana will continue aligning systems and programs to meet the goals outlined in this plan. The goals were developed through collaboration with partners and stakeholders to build on successes and overcome obstacles.

Programmatic alignment is required under both WIOA and Perkins and Montana's DLI, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), who work together to align the programs under the Perkins and WIOA umbrellas. In addition to programmatic alignment, the agencies are working together to promote and engage broad stakeholders in cultivating a better understanding of career and technical education and work-based learning as it impacts Montana students and businesses.

Notable best practices occurring throughout the state include, but are not limited to:

- Partnerships with K-12 and post-secondary education, particularly with coordination around Perkins's career and technical education, work-based learning, training mid-career workers, and serving adult learners
- Developing tools to ensure partners can use labor market information to develop demand driven workforce programs and provide meaningful training for individuals within the public workforce system
- Establishing technical apprenticeship curriculum, like healthcare and IT, in coordination with two year and community colleges across the state
- Establishing a platform for a data sharing warehouse
- Utilizing Integrated Education and Training (IET) to provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement

## 2. Montana’s Carl Perkins State Plan

According to the [Montana Carl Perkins State Plan](#), work-based learning in Montana means the following were determined as the parameters to expand and enhance high quality work-based learning experiences in Montana:

- Serve Montana’s workforce development needs
- Develop sustainable workforce pipelines
- Foster career and post-secondary readiness
- Ensure alignment of education, government, community, and business resources

### SECTION I—Understanding Work-based Learning

#### A. Introduction to High Quality Work-based Learning

Research has determined high quality work-based learning when implementing twelve components in collaboration. Those include the following:



The work-based learning element itself refers to the following:

*“This element addresses the delivery of a continuum of work-based learning involving sustained, meaningful interactions with industry or community professionals that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field. Experiences may be delivered in workplaces, in the community, at educational institutions and/or virtually, as appropriate, and include a range of activities such as workplace tours, job shadowing, school-based enterprises, internships and apprenticeships.”*

Effective work-based learning happens when the following indicators are in place:

- The full continuum of work-based learning experiences, progress in intensity, and are accessible to every student at some point during their career program of study.
- Work-based learning experiences are aligned with relevant national, state and/or local standards.
- Work-based learning experiences develop and reinforce relevant technical, academic and employability knowledge and skills.
- Work-based learning experiences are intentionally aligned with each student’s education and career goals.
- Work-based learning experiences are provided through delivery methods that maximize meaningful interaction with business professionals.
- Requirements and procedures for work-based learning experiences address access, selection, liability, supervision, rights and responsibilities, safety, and transportation, are aligned to learning objectives and evaluations which are formalized and shared in advance of work-based learning experiences with employers, students, and parents/guardians.
- Work-based learning experiences comply with relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Work-based learning experiences are built on a relationship among a student, educator, and industry mentor/site supervisor with clearly defined roles.
- Students are engaged in reflection, with documentation of learning, such as through a portfolio or presentation.

### **B. The importance of learning “All Aspects of the Industry”.**

A workplace experience benefits students to a much greater level if “all aspects of an industry” are included. Not only will it be beneficial to learn how each interconnects to the other, but it also introduces students to the range of careers found in a local business and industry.

This can be a challenge if the student is limited by age restrictions or lack of training, but a job shadow or placement with a team of employees from across departments can provide a similar learning opportunity.

Another use of this is to help identify experiences the student could be involved during their workplace experience.

All aspects of a selected industry is defined as:

- **Planning**—How an organization plans (including goals and objectives); type of ownership; and how they assess their needs.
- **Management**—The structure and process used to accomplish organizational goals; use equipment, materials, and facilities; and organize staff.
- **Finance**—The accounting and financial decision-making process, the method of acquiring capital to operate and management of financial operations such as payroll.
- **Technical and Production Skills**—The academic and technical skills needed in the workforce to produce goods or provide services, and the interpersonal skills within the organization. There may be several levels of skills required and tasks performed.
- **Underlying Principles of Technology**—The technological systems used in the workplace and their contributions to the goods produced or services provided.
- **Labor Issues**—The rights of the employees related to wages, benefits and working conditions, job descriptions and labor organizations recognized.
- **Community Issues**—The impact of the company on the community and the impact of the community on the company.
- **Health, Safety and Environment**—The practices and laws affecting the employee, the surrounding community, and the environment.
- **Personal Work Habits**—The non-technical skills and characteristics workers are expected to possess such as positive attitude, appropriate personal appearance/physical fitness, readiness to work, respect for others and willingness to follow directions.

A sample student activity found in the [Google Folder](#).

### C. Funding Work-based Learning

There are numerous ways work-based learning can be supported through federal, state, and local grants and programs. Learn more about these funding opportunities by accessing their sites through the links below.

#### 1. The Montana Advanced Opportunity Act

##### [The Montana Advanced Opportunity Act:](#)

- expands personalized career and technical education opportunities for middle and high school students.
- reduces out-of-pocket costs for students and families in support of a student's post-secondary success.
- empowers students to actively engage in forming post-secondary success that aligns with their individual interests, passions, strengths, needs and culture.
- authorizes elected school boards to use advanced opportunity aid to invest in Montana students by supporting individualized pathways for career and post-secondary.

## 2. **Transformational Learning- MCA 20-7-1602**

[Transformational Learning](#) is defined as a flexible system of pupil-centered learning that is designed to meet the Montana Constitutional mandate of "fully developing the educational potential of each person."

When the 2019 Legislature adjourned, House Bill 351, sponsored by Representative Wendy McKamey, had passed and was subsequently signed into law by Governor Steve Bullock. HB 351 amends section 20-9-116, MCA, and revises education laws to support transformational learning. Transformational learning is defined in the bill as a flexible system of pupil-centered learning that is designed to meet the Montana Constitutional Mandate "*to develop the full educational potential of each person.*" In the 2019 legislative session, HB351 was changed to HB089, changing the first-come, first-served ranking to a lottery system.

Further definition is provided in the bill as to what outcomes should be addressed such as:

- A system that is customized to address each pupil's strengths, needs and interests.
- A system that includes continued focus on each pupil's proficiency over content.
- A system that actively engages each pupil in determining what, how, when and where each pupil learns

## 3. **General Vocational Rehabilitation**

This funding source provides individualized vocational rehabilitation and supportive services to assist eligible individuals with disabilities to obtain, maintain, and advance in jobs compatible with their skills and abilities.

## 4. **[Pre-Employment Transition Services](#)**

Pre-employment transition services offers all school-enrolled students with disabilities aged 14-21 in Montana an early start to job exploration and instruction in self-advocacy. These services are provided in partnership with local education agencies, community rehabilitation providers, and independent living centers.

## 5. **The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

WIOA Adult Education Programs offer free services to help qualifying individuals prepare for the HiSET (high school equivalency exam – formerly the GED), postsecondary education or specialized training, and the workforce. These programs provide a variety of opportunities for adult learners to enhance the skills necessary to become self-sufficient, and to be college and career ready. Since many students turn 18 while in high school, and some leave before graduating, it's important to know about WIOA and how this program can assist these students meet their workforce goals.

The purpose of Adult Education (AE) is to create a partnership between the Federal Government, States, and localities to provide adult education activities in order to:

- assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency.
- assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that—
  - are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children
  - lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family
- assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in improving their
  - reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English
  - Mathematics skills
- acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

#### **D. The Educational Importance of Work-based Learning in Montana**

Carl Perkins also addresses the importance of Work-based Learning and allows local education agencies (LEAs) to use Perkins funding to address a well-rounded career and college-ready student through approved CTE programs:

- The bill defines work-based learning as sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, first-hand engagement with the tasks required of a given career field, which are aligned to curriculum and instruction.
- Work-based learning is included as one of the services qualified intermediaries (as defined in the bill) are authorized to facilitate.
- The bill includes work-based learning in the core indicators of performance for CTE concentrators at the secondary level as one of the indicators of CTE program quality states may choose.
- The bill includes incorporating work-based learning as one of the allowable activities that can be undertaken to improve CTE outcomes for students using funds received through the Innovation and Modernization Grant.
- Expanding work-based learning opportunities is included as an allowable use for the state leadership set aside.

Work-based learning activities provide extended learning experiences connecting acquired knowledge and skills to a student's future. Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and community partners share responsibility for assisting all students in developing to their fullest potential.

#### **E. Opportunities for Business and Industry (B&I) Involvement**

Industry/business leaders play an essential role in helping students explore careers, learn skills that will get them hired, and contribute to a strong and equitable workforce system.

From student and teacher facing activities—career awareness, exploration, preparation, and launch— to system level changes — advocacy, funding, industry tables, and culture shifts— there are many ways employers can lead in workforce talent development.

# WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

TIME INVESTMENT

STUDENT & TEACHER FACING ACTIVITIES



## CAREER AWARENESS

Support students' early awareness of exciting careers in your industry.

- Participate on a **Career Panel** at a school.
- Table or host a **Career Fair** at a school.
- Host a **Worksite Tour** for students to visit your company.

Low



## CAREER EXPLORATION

Inform and motivate the next generation of young professionals and help teachers connect your careers to their curriculum.

- Host a student **Job Shadow** or **Informational Interview**.
- Attend a **Networking & Career Prep Workshop**.
- Participate in an **Industry-based Design Challenge** (support students through a real-world problem).
- Offer a **Teacher Externship** (worksite visit).

Mid



## CAREER PREPARATION

Advise students and provide them with career experiences linked to their classroom learning.

- Host a high school **Intern**.
- **Mentor** a student.

High



## CAREER LAUNCH

Develop a ready workforce with the credentials required for jobs in your industry.

- Provide **On-the-Job Training**.
- Sponsor a **Registered Youth Apprenticeship**.

High

SYSTEM LEVEL CHANGES



## ADVOCACY

Build support for ongoing success of career pathways and talent development.

- Write to or meet with **Legislators**.
- Attend a regional **Legislative Breakfast**.
- Create an **Outreach/PR Campaign**.

Low



## FUNDING

Provide flexible funding that can match restrictive public investments and support innovative ideas.

- **Invest** in organizations and schools supporting career connected learning.

Low



## INDUSTRY TABLES & COMMITTEES

Be part of a streamlined/single point of contact and ensure industry alignment with courses and experiences.

- Serve on an **Industry Sector Partnership Table** (industry-led groups working on shared problems and solutions).
- Serve on a **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Board** or a school district industry-specific **Career Pathway Committee**.

Mid



## CULTURE SHIFTS

Create changes within your business that support a diverse and inclusive workplace.

- Examine your **workplace culture** and **message** about your organization's values towards the next generation workforce.

High

## **F. Benefits of Work-based Learning**

Why is work-based learning important?

### **1. Students benefit from work-based learning through:**

- Application of classroom learning (both academic and technical) in real-world settings
- Establishment of a clear connection between school and work
- Assessment of their interests, aptitudes, and abilities while learning about the career possibilities available to them (MCIS, Naviance, Career Cruising, ASVAB tests all offer assessments)
- Improvement of their post-graduation employment opportunities
- Development and practice of positive work-related habits and attitudes including the ability to think critically, solve problems, work in teams, and resolve issues
- Assessment and understanding of the expectations of the workplace
- Establishment of professional contacts for future employment
- Expansion and refinement of their technical skills
- Awareness of postsecondary education opportunities

### **2. Employers benefit from work-based learning through:**

- A pool of skilled and motivated potential future employees
- Improved employee retention
- Reduced training/recruitment costs
- Developmental opportunities for the current workforce
- Development of new projects with student assistance
- Involvement in the curriculum development process
- An opportunity to provide community service

### **3. School, Parents and Community benefits from work-based learning by:**

- Expanding student interest in local businesses for employment
- Growing your own replacement workforce or expanding workers as you need them
- Volunteer components that bring economic value through services provided or work completed, which means local tax bases will not need to be tapped
- Strengthening school to work relationships that build support for school initiatives
- Providing real world experiences that help build a well-rounded education
- Allowing exploration of careers that encourages career success.

## **II. WBL Planning and Implementation in Montana**

### **A. The importance of being Montana Ready**

This initiative developed by State Superintendent Elsie Arntzen recognizes the need to focus on community, college and career readiness.

Early career awareness emphasis beginning in primary grades will provide students with the opportunity to explore career options before selecting a [MT Career Pathway](#) at the high school level.

Work-based learning comprises a wide range of activities that are conducted as an extended learning experience within any school program and across all grade bands.

There are four categories of work-based learning:

- Career Awareness
- Career Exploration
- Career Preparation
- Career Training

Activities in these categories can vary in duration, implementation, grade level, and if they are in person or virtual activities.

### **B. Age-Aligned WBL Experiences**

Work-based Learning is not limited to a few students in their senior year but can be integrated across all grade bands.

As mentioned before, age and developmentally appropriate activities can build a strong understanding that encourages a richer experience and capstone workplace experience where employability and technical skills are practiced and demonstrated. Refer to the table below for alignment examples.

# Age-aligned WBL Experiences

GRADE  
LEVEL

STUDENT & TEACHER FACING ACTIVITIES



## CAREER AWARENESS

Provides understanding to all sectors of the workforce. It can begin in the early and middle grades through the first two years of high school.

- Share **Career Interest Surveys** provided through most online career guidance systems.
- Participate on a **Career Panel or Guest Speaker** at a school.
- Table or host a **Career Fair** at a school.
- Host a **Worksite Tour** for students to visit your company.
- Build students' sense of pride in their community through **Community Involvement** or **Service Projects**.

K-12



## CAREER EXPLORATION

Inform and motivate the next generation of young professionals and help teachers connect your careers to their curriculum.

- Provide students **Job Shadow** or **Informational Interview** opportunities.
- Host **Networking & Career Prep Workshop**.
- Engage students in **Career and Technical Student Organizations**.
- Encourage participation in **Career-focused Summer Camps**.
- Participate in an **Industry-based Design Challenge**.
- Engage in **Teacher Externship** (worksite visit).

K-12



## CAREER PREPARATION

Provide students with career experiences linked to their classroom learning. These experiences usually happen in secondary and post-secondary; however, implementation of **Service Learning** and **School Based Enterprises** could happen in the middle grades.

- Combine classroom curriculum to meet community need through **Service Learning**. This coordinated effort is between the school and community.
- Coordinate learning experiences through **Cooperative Work-based Learning** within the local community. These can be volunteer or paid activities, also referred to as **Internships**.
- Create **School Based Enterprises** allowing students engagement in all aspects of operation and management of a business. This could involve the sales of goods or services as part of the school's educational program.
- Connect students with **Pre-Apprenticeship** opportunities and programs that will prepare them to enter and succeed in **Registered Apprenticeship Programs**.

Grade 7-  
post-  
secondary



## CAREER LAUNCH

Develop a ready workforce with the credentials required for jobs across all sectors of industry. These may start in high school and continue through post-secondary programs.

- Train students to receive **Industry Recognized Credentials** through certificates of completion acknowledged by the state or federal government or completion of a degree.
- Connect students and adults to **On-the-Job Training, Registered Youth Apprenticeship, Registered Apprenticeships, and Supported Employment**.

Grade 11-  
post-  
secondary  
and adult  
education

## C. Modified Experiences to Promote Equity and Access for all students

Schools and communities, through practice and technology, are continually moving towards the principles of equality, choice, and authentic respect for all students' abilities.

Equality is an approach that seeks to establish that all members of society are important. Each child in our communities is worth investing in. It is a combination of interpersonal interaction, equality, and choice that makes cooperative work- based learning and career readiness development particularly beneficial for students with varied learning abilities.

It is the responsibility of all schools and communities to work together in partnership to help students develop life-long skill sets for independent success. A student who is educated and experienced will have the confidence and ability to be independently successful for a lifetime. Education that continues to build lessons and refine or upgrade student learning will be a pathway to successful inclusion of all students.

Work-based learning experiences can be established to meet the unique needs of students with special considerations. Many will benefit from school-based learning experiences or working directly with community organizations or workplace entities where employment of special needs students is likely after completion of their education within the K-12 system. Equity factors come into play as well.

See the [google folder](#) for more information. Contacting OPI's Special Education Division can address many of the questions you have regarding the training needs for this cohort of students.

#### **D. The Role of Student Leadership Organizations (SLOs)**

Participation within a pathway aligned student organization is one of the twelve indicators of a quality Work-based Learning program.

A quality student organization should:

- Offer extended classroom experiences that promote technical and employability skill attainment through the real work application of content and training.
- Provide opportunities to practice skills with industry partners, school officials and community leaders as they work within occupational and/or local settings. Service components provide additional experiences to enhance employability skills in real time under the guidance of a trained advisor.
- Offer competitions to further skill development as members demonstrate their skills by competing against industry designed standards as evaluated by industry representatives and/or community leaders.
- Add relevance and commitment to excellence as well as learning where further study and practice is needed, all to prepare the student member for success as an adult.
- Offer recognition, scholarships, and industry aligned internship/apprenticeship positions through their advancing student organization involvement.
- Linked to enhanced student success for all youth.

#### **E. Reporting Student WBL, Dual Credit, and/or Industry-recognized Credentialing**

Integrating WBL activities across all grade bands is considered a best practice. Schools should report semester or yearlong workplace experiences when they enter their course information into the TEAMS reporting system using the aligned course codes for each program area that has "workplace experiences" in the title.

Student enrollment in these courses is collected through the CTE End of Year Data Collection in Infinite Campus.

In addition to reporting the number of pathways credits the student has earned, schools also need to report the WBL, and Dual Enrollment Credits earned within each pathway. The information collected in Infinite Campus is used to calculate school CTE performance report cards, uploaded into E-Grants for use in the Perkins Grant Application, and reported in Montana's annual federal CTE performance reports.

Earning credentials are an indicator of workforce readiness. These credentials show completion of necessary skills to gain employment or advanced training.

## Infinite Campus Screen

CTE Participant Detail

\*CTE Pathway  \*CTE Concentrator  \*Student Single Parent  \*Start Date 03/08/2022 Modified Date 03/08/2022

**CTE Credits**

Total Pathway Credits Earned  
0

Total Pathway Credits Earned is automatically calculated from the sum of In District Credits Earned and Out of District Credits Earned.  
Students who have earned a minimum of 2 Pathway Credits are considered a CTE Concentrator.

In District Credits Earned  Out of District Credits Earned

0 0

Dual Enrollment Credits  Work Based Learning Credits

DISTRICT CREDIT EARNED

A list of most common credentials used in Montana can serve as a guide for matching to CTE program areas. This list is found within the [WBL Google file](#).

The most direct way to report semester or yearlong worksite activities is to enter the data into the TEAMS reporting system using the aligned course codes for each program area. This is not an extensive list but serves as a guide for matching to the most common CTE program areas.

### F. The Economic Value of Student Volunteer Hours

Volunteering has benefits for students as they participate in a variety of activities, those organized for their participation, as well as those they organize as part of their school or student organization experiences. But it also has strong benefit for local communities and schools.

It is important to realize these volunteer efforts do have economic value as well as value produced as a member of the workforce. Montana CTE collects these hours as part of the data collection process, and schools are encouraged to collect and report all hours including those as part of classroom instruction and service activities.

In April of 2022, the Value of Volunteer Time and AmeriCorps released an updated report stating that each volunteer hour provides \$29.95 of economic value to local communities, who otherwise would need to contract for services to meet their needs. [The University of Maryland](#) School of Public Policy, with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Labor calculates this annually.

### G. Regulations, Student Safety, and Insurance

Work-based Learning opportunities can create liability exposures. It is important that all parties understand and accept their own responsibilities and liabilities.

1. [Montana Youth Employment Resources:](#)
2. [Federal Guidelines:](#)

The federal child labor provisions, also known as the child labor laws, are authorized by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938. These provisions were enacted to ensure that when young people work, the work is safe and does not jeopardize their health, wellbeing or educational opportunities.

By knowing, understanding, and complying with these provisions, employers, parents, and teachers can help working teens enjoy those safe, positive, early work experiences that can be so important to their development. It is expected that students who are part of workplace experiences have come through a recognized career and technical education program (a.k.a. vocational education).

Work related experiences in the Hospitality and Tourism, Agriculture, and Trades and Health areas have federal regulations. Experiences in Early Childhood may have state regulations as well.

The federal guidelines for regulations regarding work and age limitations are accessible here. It is important any local WBL experience be considerate of these regulations:

[Child Labor Regulations](#) for Non-Agricultural Occupations Under the Fair Labors Act—Child Labor Bulletin 101

[Child Labor Regulations](#) for Agricultural Occupations Under the Fair Labors Act—Child Labor Bulletin 102

[Internship Programs](#) Under the Fair Labor Standards Act – Fact Sheet #71.

### 3. Insurance

Work-based Learning experiences for CTE participants within an approved pathway have coverage those outside of pathway training do not. See above for Child Labor Regulations for details.

School systems are highly encouraged to pursue additional insurance riders on their school insurance, as work-based opportunities are not the same as a field trip where guardian consent forms are sufficient.

### 4. The Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA)

MTSBA encourages schools to work with their business/industry partners to add Volunteer Worker's Compensation to the coverage they already have in place.

### 5. Other laws

Additional information concerning federal labor laws for youth can be found at [Youth Rules!](#)

## **SECTION II: Additional WBL information within Approved CTE Programs**

### **I. Work-based Learning as a capstone experience within approved Career and Technical Education programs**

Work-based Learning within Career and Technical Education programs offers a rigorous expansion of experiences as determined by student participation and concentration status. Montana CTE pathways were developed to offer foundational knowledge and technical skills before a capstone work-based learning experience is offered. This directly connects the pathway training and skill development to the work-based learning experience where these skills are demonstrated. The goal is a demonstration of mastery, not the introduction of entry-level skill sets.

Additional funding is provided for these experiences. See the following for more details concerning setting up and funding these capstone experiences.

### **II. Carl Perkins Work-based Learning Definition**

It is important to begin with understanding what is meant by work-based learning. There are a number of definitions that exist, but career and technical education looks foundationally at the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 ([As Amended Through P.L. 116-6 Enacted February 15, 2019](#)).

As per Sec.3 [20 U.S.C. 2302] Definitions of Public Law 88-210:

*“(55) WORK-BASED LEARNING. —The term “work-based learning” means sustained interactions with industry or community professionals 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 in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.”*

Note the components underlined. This indicates alignment to CTE sequence of coursework. The following sections are included to further understand what work-based learning in Montana entails and how to build effective experiences and address the underlined components.

### **III. High Quality Work-based Learning in CTE programs**

In-depth research by the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) has identified high-quality quality Work-based Learning programs have twelve indicators. Combined, the twelve positively impact work-based learning as each provides content that prepares students for this capstone experience.

# High Quality Workbased Learning

## Indicators

<input type="checkbox"/>	Standards-Aligned and Integrated
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sequencing and Articulation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepared and Effective Program Staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaging Instruction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Access and Equity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilities, Equipment, Technology and Materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business and Community Partners
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Career Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSOs)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work-based learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data and Program Improvement

It is important to review all these indicators which can be [accessed here](#). This source also includes a self-assessment which can be helpful when determining strength of a local CTE program and where improvements might be needed. They are expected to be addressed in combination, not as stand-alone components.

#### IV. Funding Work-based Learning in CTE

There are numerous ways work-based learning can be supported through federal, state, and local grants and programs aimed, with several options only open to approved CTE programs.

##### 1. Carl D. Perkins

In [Section 135 Local Use of Funds](#), it outlines in Section 5 subset E that “a continuum of work-based learning opportunities, including simulated work environments,” are allowable uses of funding.

Carl Perkins focuses on career exploration and training through work-based learning. This is why it is also one of Montana’s Performance Indicators. Carl Perkins and State CTE funding can be used to support work-based learning, but there are also other state funding streams that can be leveraged as well.

## 2. The Montana Advanced Opportunity Act

### [The Montana Advanced Opportunity Act:](#)

- H. expands personalized career and technical education opportunities for middle and high school students.
- I. reduces out-of-pocket costs for students and families in support of a student's post-secondary success.
- J. empowers students to actively engage in forming post-secondary success that aligns with their individual interests, passions, strengths, needs and culture.
- K. authorizes elected school boards to use advanced opportunity aid to invest in Montana students by supporting individualized pathways for career and post-secondary.

## 3. Transformational Learning- MCA 20-7-1602

[Transformational Learning](#) is defined as a flexible system of pupil-centered learning that is designed to meet the Montana Constitutional mandate of "fully developing the educational potential of each person."

When the 2019 Legislature adjourned, House Bill 351, sponsored by Representative Wendy McKamey, had passed and was subsequently signed into law by Governor Steve Bullock. HB 351 amends section 20-9-116, MCA, and revises education laws to support transformational learning. Transformational learning is defined in the bill as a flexible system of pupil-centered learning that is designed to meet the Montana Constitutional Mandate "to develop the full educational potential of each person." In the 2019 legislative session, HB351 was changed to HB089, changing the first-come, first-served ranking to a lottery system.

Further definition is provided in the bill as to what outcomes should be addressed:

- A system that is customized to address each pupil's strengths, needs and interests.
- A system that includes continued focus on each pupil's proficiency over content.
- A system that actively engages each pupil in determining what, how, when and where each pupil learns.

## 4. Career and Technical Education State Funding

The [Montana Legislature](#) revised State Funding to include Work-based Learning activities. The funding formula currently addresses:

- Licensed/endorsed CTE teacher
- SCED Codes for courses taught with enrollment numbers for each course and minutes per semester/year
- CTSO membership.
- Work based Learning Credit opportunities

(It is at the discretion of the Local Education Agency to determine how their allocation is spent, but can include the cost of materials, certifications, staff time, student assistance with specific work-related clothing/shoes, or student travel.)

## **5. Title Funding for CTE/CTSO Support for Homeless and Foster Students**

Homeless and foster student success has been linked with enrollment in CTE classes and CTSO membership. For that reason, their participation in both has been identified as a strategy for decreasing school dropout numbers and increasing graduation rates.

Since these students are considered special populations, there are additional federal monies for any school activity that does include CTE experiences and CTSO participation. Foster Care students can be supported with Title I, Part A funds. Homeless students can be supported with Title I, Part A funds, but also may have McKinney Vento funds (additional ARP/HCY I and ARP/HCY II funds). However, for students to access these funds, they must be identified as either homeless or foster.

For [additional information](#), see Federal Grants Coordinator/Foster Care Point of Contact or State Coordinator of Homeless Education/Title I Specialist.

## **6. CTSO Financial Support**

Additional funding is provided for employability skill opportunities through our Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). These funds are available to the State Directors and Boards for the seven recognized CTSO's in Montana through Strengthen CTSO funds. See below for more information.

## **V. The Role of Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO)**

ACTE has determined participation within a pathway aligned CTSO as one of the twelve indicators of a quality CTE program and sees it as a vital part of any CTE program for the following reasons:

- It offers experiences within a pathway aligned CTSO that promotes technical and employability skill attainment through the real work application of classroom CTE content and training.
- It provides opportunities to practice skills with industry partners, school officials and community leaders as they work within occupational and/or local settings. Service components provide additional experiences to enhance employability skills in real time under the watchful eye of the CTSO adviser.
- Competitions further this development as student members demonstrate their skills by competing against industry designed standards as evaluated by industry representatives and/or community leaders. This adds relevance and commitment to excellence as well as learning where further study and practice is needed, all to prepare the student member for success as an adult.
- Student members can earn recognition, scholarships, and industry aligned internship/apprenticeship positions through their advancing CTSO involvement.
- Participation in CTE classes and CTSO memberships have been linked to enhanced student success for homeless and foster youth. For that reason, their participation in both has been identified as a strategy for decreasing school dropout numbers and increasing graduation rates. See “Title Funding and CTE/CTSO Support” for more information regarding additional funding for homeless and foster youth.

NOTE: [Montana Strengthening Career and Technology Student Organizations](#) provides financial support to seven statewide Career and Technical Student Organizations in Montana to direct student engagement in leadership, employability skills, and workforce development

## VI. Montana Career programs of study

- Montana acknowledges sixteen programs of study which reflect the workforce needs of the state. All programs are available to all Montana schools.
- Each career program offers course work sequencing, industry alignment and work-based learning experiences. The placement of course offerings are identified through course coding where foundational courses (or introductory skill sets) are offered first, with application and skill demonstration courses follow. This sequencing of courses allows greater skill development and technical knowledge understanding.
- Local CTE programs receive technical assistance from the CTAE team at OPI through content specialization support. To learn more, see [Career and Technical Education Team](#)
- Access the programs of study, with workforce need and sample occupations through this link. (Like to the programs page).

## Resources for WBL Procedures and Documents

The following resources may prove helpful as local decisions are being made:

- **[U.S. Department of Labor--Work-based Learning Toolkit:](#)**

This tool kit will provide state and local program administrators with information regarding the key components of work-based learning (WBL), an instructional strategy that enhances classroom learning by connecting it to the workplace. It offers guidelines and resources related to creating a state WBL strategy, engaging employers, collecting data, and scaling effective programs.

- **[Montana Department of Labor and Industry—](#)**

This website is providing Montana specific labor data and career resources that are important when developing on work-based learning/workplace experiences. See two components that are suggested as a starting point:

- **[Montana Employment Information](#)**

Access data related to workforce needs in Montana as well as employment, salary and county-based searches

- **[Montana Career Lab Resources:](#)**

A wealth of K-12 classroom resources including a Montana Personalized Career Plan outline and checklist for district planning across all grade bands. Activities and resources are cross walked to the Montana Career and Technical Education K-12 standards.

- **[Montana Career and Technical Education K-12 Standards](#)**

CTE K-12 Standards were adopted in 2021. These standards can be introduced and practiced starting at grade K and advancing through grade 12. The standards will help students build necessary skills to become Montana Ready.

- **[Work-based Learning Google File:](#)**

Additional WBL procedures, forms, and documents can be accessed to assess districts in setting up high quality WBL experiences. This file is a living document and will be added to as documents are developed and/or updated. Check back often.

- **[Contacts When You Have Questions](#)**