

Business and Education: Building the Future Workforce Together

SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

Advancing automation. Accelerating business processes. Increasing complexity in all economic sectors. These are hallmarks of today's economy. The challenge is to find and train the **people** to power our economy and be competitive on a global scale. But how?

This much is clear: It has never been more important for business and education to work together to meet the challenge. Communication is key. Sharing a common language will help everyone talk about the activities needed to prepare students for the economy into which they will graduate.

A Shared Vocabulary

Three terms are essential in helping employers and educators work together:

Academic and Career Planning (ACP) is a sequence of educational activities (grades 6-12) that equips students and their families with the tools to make informed choices about postsecondary education, training, and careers.

Career-based learning experiences (CBLEs) are ACP activities that involve an employer or industry partner. The 18 most common CBLEs are listed in the chart below. The chart starts with those that require the least amount of time from employers to those that require the most time and have the greatest impact on students.

Work-based learning (WBL) experiences are a subset of CBLEs. These meet the quality and rigor requirements for federal funding and generally help students develop technical and professional skills needed for a specific career. To qualify as a WBL, an experience must meet ALL of the following criteria:

1. Interaction must be sustained (a minimum of 90 hours) and performance-based.
2. Takes place at a real workplace setting or a simulated setting at an educational institution.
3. Fosters in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career.
4. Aligns with a course (a minimum of one semester).

5. Involves a training agreement that defines the roles of the student, employer/business, and school.
6. Requires regular, periodic oversight and interactions with employers or community members from the industry.

Career-Based Learning Experiences (CBLEs)

The ACP process includes four stages of development: KNOW (career awareness), EXPLORE (career exploration), PLAN (career planning), and GO (career management). To develop a strong pipeline for future talent, we encourage industries to offer CBLEs at each ACP stage.

For each experience in the chart below, employers can get an idea of the activity and whether a CBLE might also qualify as a work-based learning (WBL) experience. Most CBLEs can be offered either in person or virtually. Employers should expect to receive specific details on the time commitment and number of students participating from educators who reach out to a business about one of these opportunities.

Academic & Career Planning Stage	Career-Based Learning Experience	Details
KNOW - Activities that help students build awareness of the broad spectrum of career opportunities.	Classroom speaker	An employer talks with students about a job, business or industry, personal journey, job duties and responsibilities, skills and knowledge needed, or a specific curricular topic.
	Company tour	A company hosts a tour of facilities to highlight careers there. The focus may be a typical day, opportunities for students, or a curricular connection to a specific topic.
	Career fair	Groups of businesses staff booths or meet with students to share career information, advice on pursuing a career, knowledge needed, and career roles and responsibilities.
	Career-related project	An employer mentors a group of students, in a class or out-of-school activity, as they work on a project that is connected to the employer's industry or area of expertise.

Academic & Career Planning Stage	Career-Based Learning Experience	Details
	Part-time or summer job	A job occurring outside of the school day, unless work-release has been granted, in which the employer is not coordinating with the student's school as part of a specific program. (It is not school-supervised.)
EXPLORE - Activities that help students further explore a specific career area.	Job shadow	A student observes an employee at a business anywhere from a few hours to a few days to learn about a particular occupation or industry. Students are not paid.
	Career-related volunteer or service learning	An individual or group of students volunteer or work on a project that benefits a nonprofit organization while learning about related careers and developing skills.
	Career and technical student organization (CTSO) or career-related out-of-school activity	An extracurricular or co-curricular club that involves business professionals who act as mentors and/or competition judges. Participation offers a way to apply knowledge gained in regular coursework. Examples of career-related extracurricular or co-curricular activities are SkillsUSA, HOSA, FBLA, FFA, FCLA, DECA, Girls Who Code, First Robotics, and Science Olympiad.
PLAN & GO - Activities that help students develop skills related to a career they plan to pursue.	Informational interview	A student interviews an employer or community member about a profession or a specific topic. The interview may be in person, by phone, by email, or in a group.
	Career mentoring	Employers or community members coach students on career activities, such as resume review, mock interviews, or other career development-related activities.
	Simulated worksite*	A simulated worksite mirrors a live employment setting and may include facilities, resources, and equipment provided by the employer or the school.

Academic & Career Planning Stage	Career-Based Learning Experience	Details
<p>PLAN & GO - Activities that help students develop skills related to a career they plan to pursue.</p>	<p>School-Based Enterprise (SBE)*</p>	<p>An SBE is an enhanced entrepreneurial operation located within the school. Examples include school stores (food and retail focus), coffee shops, and financial institutions.</p>
	<p>Student Entrepreneurial Experience (SEE)*</p>	<p>Similar to an SBE, an SEE is student-developed and -led, usually with a school or community mentor. Employers may provide mentoring, facilities, resources, and equipment in the operation, which helps students develop skills and competencies necessary to succeed in business. Examples may include a laptop repair service, a lawn maintenance enterprise , or a graphic/printing service.</p>
	<p>Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE)*</p>	<p>SAEs are student-led and instructor-supervised work-based learning experiences that result in measurable outcomes within a predefined, agreed-upon set of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) Technical Standards and career-ready practices aligned to a related career pathway.</p>
	<p>Internship or local co-op*</p>	<p>This is a school-approved training program in which the student is placed with an employer for a limited time. Activities and learning objectives are structured to give the student insight into a particular business or occupation.</p>
	<p><u>State-certified Employability Skills Co-op**</u></p>	<p>A state-certified, school-supervised work-based learning program operated by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). This is an elective program that combines mentored on-the-job learning with classroom instruction. Students are required to work a minimum of 90 hours.</p>
	<p><u>State-certified Occupational Program Co-op**</u></p>	<p>A specific state-certified, school-supervised work-based learning program operated by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). This is a one-year elective that combines mentored on-the-job learning with classroom instruction. Students are required to work a minimum of 480 hours.</p>

Academic & Career Planning Stage	Career-Based Learning Experience	Details
<p>PLAN & GO - Activities that help students develop skills related to a career they plan to pursue.</p>	<p>Youth Apprenticeship (YA) **</p>	<p>A specific state-certified, school-supervised work-based learning program, operated by Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD). YA integrates school-based and work-based learning to instruct students in employability and occupational skills defined by Wisconsin industries. Program Certification. Students are required to work a minimum 450 hours in one calendar year for a Level I YA and a minimum 900 hours in two calendar years for a Level II YA.</p>

**This CBLE may be converted to a work-based learning experience.*

***This is a work-based learning experience.*

For more detailed information, see the [Wisconsin Guide to Implementing Career-Based Learning Experiences](#).

Employer-Provided Experiences for Education Professionals

Training the next generation of workers requires educational professionals to stay on the cutting edge of knowledge and skills within an industry. When businesses and employers provide professional development experiences to classroom teachers, district or school administrators, counselors, and school board members, they not only update the educators, but also indirectly update the students they come in contact with.

Employer-Provided Professional Development	Details
<p>1a. Educator Shadow or Visit</p>	<p>Local educators visit an employer worksite to learn more about the career opportunities that exist in the employer's industry and the skills needed for success. The educator then works to integrate what they learned into the curriculum.</p>
<p>2a. Curriculum Consultant</p>	<p>An employer serves as an expert discussing trends and industry standards related to K-12 curriculum and career readiness activities for a defined period of time or on as-needed basis.</p>

Employer-Provided Professional Development	Details
3a. Educator Externship	Local educators work at a company for an extended period of time to learn more about the career opportunities that exist in the employer’s industry and the skills needed for success. The educator then works to integrate what they learn into the curriculum. This could include several job shadow experiences for the educator within the time frame allotted or a paid work experience.
4a. Advisory Board Member	An employer serves as an expert discussing trends and industry standards and providing career pathway program feedback for a school district’s advisory board for an extended period of time.

Contact Information

To work with a school near you, please reach out to the Regional Career Pathway Coordinator nearest you. [Find your contact here.](#)

