

# What is Work-Based Learning (WBL)?



## TIP SHEET

Work-Based Learning (WBL) is a term for activities which link employers and schools to provide special learning experiences for students. These experiences focus on developing broad skills that apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to the real world. Students with disabilities must be given the opportunity to participate in work-based learning programs that fit their needs. These work experiences can be paid or unpaid. The work-based learning helps students to find their career interests, assess their training needs, and develop the skills and attitudes necessary for paid employment. School credit may be given for these experiences.

### WHY SHOULD STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN WORK-BASED LEARNING?

WBL is an important educational experience. It helps develop the foundation skills that will be needed in the shift to adulthood. WBL is a way to take learning beyond the classroom. Students can connect classroom and work-based learning, helping to prepare students for future schooling and careers.

BENEFITS OF WORK-BASED LEARNING			
STUDENTS	EMPLOYERS	SCHOOLS	COMMUNITY
Links school and the world of work	Links work professionals and educators	Expands program and learning facilities	Creates an environment of collaboration and cooperation
More motivation to stay in school	Develops relationships with the school systems	Provides access to new technology and job trends	Provides visible results within the school system
Makes contacts for future employment and mentoring	Helps develop more skilled and motivated employees	Meets the needs of diverse students	Encourages community respect and tolerance
Builds positive work habits and better understanding of workplace expectations	Provides opportunity for community service	Makes education more relevant and engaging to students	Sets a base for a more productive economy



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### TYPES OF WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS

<p><b>Job Shadowing</b> Following an employee at a workplace for 1 to 8 hours to learn about an occupation or career pathway of interest. (For students with disabilities, up to 5 hours is allowed)</p>	<p><b>Community Service/Volunteering</b> Volunteer experiences that teach students responsibility, community involvement, and an awareness of the needs of others.</p>
<p><b>Service Learning</b> Community service that directly connects to the knowledge and skills learned in classrooms.</p>	<p><b>Senior Project</b> Students research a topic or career interest in a specific career pathway. This research serves to guide the student in learning about the college preparation and skills training needed to be successful in that pathway.</p>
<p><b>School Based Enterprise</b> Business within the school that provides services for students and/or staff, for example a store or a newspaper stand and a credit union.</p>	<p><b>Career Fair</b> An event to expose students to many career pathways and help them match their interests and abilities to potential career options. (Does NOT count toward hours for CDOS credential)</p>
<p><b>Career Focused Field Trips</b> Tours of local businesses to learn about career opportunities and the paths to take in order to explore a group of similar jobs. (Does NOT count toward hours for CDOS Credential)</p>	<p><b>Entrepreneurship (New Start-Up Business)</b> Students plan a start-up company or product idea involving the design of a business plan, financial planning and marketing strategy as an activity or class project. (Does NOT count toward a CDOS Credential)</p>
<p><b>Internship/Community Based Work Experience</b> This is a supervised school-based and/or community based work experience for students which can be paid or unpaid. The work experience will help students identify career interests, develop work skills, and assess the necessary skills needed for employment.</p>	

Specific guidelines (set by the U.S. Department of Labor and Education) for providing community based work programs for students with disabilities.

- \*Vocational exploration - 5 hours per job experience
- \*Vocational assessment - 90 hours per job experience
- \*Vocational training - 120 hours per job experience

References and information provided by:

-The Way to Work: How to Facilitate Work Experiences for Youth in Transition by Richard G. Luecking

-NEW YORK STATE WORK BASED LEARNING MANUAL

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/wbl/home.html>

Visit [www.parentnetworkwny.org](http://www.parentnetworkwny.org) for more info.

