

DELAWARE'S FRAMEWORK

FOR ADVANCING CAREER AND COLLEGE SUCCESS THROUGH WORK-BASED LEARNING

CHALLENGE

The idea of connecting educators and employers is not new. Yet states and local education agencies (LEAs) continue to struggle in developing a system that successfully places students in continuing education and facilitates entrance or advancement in a career. The result is an alarmingly high rate of unemployment for young adults (age 20-24) when compared to all other age demographics.

GOAL

By school year 2018-19, Delaware's work-based learning (WBL) system will support 8,000 students across our secondary and postsecondary education system as they pursue "career immersion" experiences that are aligned with their career pathway.

BACKGROUND

To ensure Delaware's vision for WBL is reflective of student and employer needs, the Department of Education convened school system leaders, postsecondary partners, state agencies, and employers to review exemplary WBL models across the country. These best practices have shaped the following guiding principles which will be used to develop Delaware's WBL policy and procedures.

VISION

Delaware students will be prepared for continuing education and competitive employment with greater access to a statewide work-based learning system.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1 - COLLEGE AND CAREER READY FOCUS

It is critical to note that the future of WBL is not the existing "cooperative education programs" and "diversified occupations programs" defined in [Section 3.0 and 4.0 of DE Admin. Code 525](#). Delaware's WBL system must be a viable option for all students and build on a series of progressive experiences starting with "career awareness" and "career exploration" in elementary and middle school followed by "career immersion" opportunities in high school that actively place students into competitive employment aligned with their chosen career pathway. Each experience will include academic, technical, and career ready practices and be part of a comprehensive model of evaluation that documents student achievement and progression of skill. Existing infrastructure including, but not limited to student success plans, SPARC, case management systems, and the eSchool data system will be leveraged to support students, postsecondary institutions, and employers in addition to providing measureable objectives for continuous improvement.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2 - COMMON APPROACH TO EMPLOYER AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Delaware's approach to WBL must be a shared effort between educators, employers, and community organizations. Our mutual interest in the educational achievement and career advancement of youth is paramount to a successful model. This includes defining a common approach to engage employers and message consistent expectations for student achievement. Underlying policy and process tools will be developed jointly

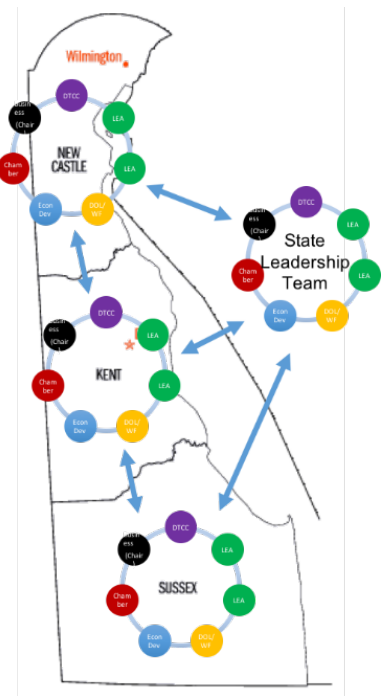


between the Department of Education, Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC), employers and school system staff to support implementation and drive professional learning opportunities to further support all students, including special populations. Through a system of shared accountability and ownership, points of failure will be identified and removed.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3 – WORKFORCE INTERMEDIARY ENABLED STRUCTURE

It is critical that LEAs actively work to place students in early career experiences and that LEAs maintain active relationships with partnering employers. However, the need to provide regional and statewide coordination of these activities as part of a larger system of youth employment necessitates the formation of an employer facing organization or workforce intermediary. In this role, DTCC will support the work of each county team by organizing meetings, maintaining shared resources, leading and/or supporting school and employer engagement, and providing regional professional development.

Staff from the DTCC will work with LEAs, employers, and community-based organizations to expand and build upon regional employer engagement. This work will support industry sectors and employer associations (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Farm Bureau) to create a demand for student employment and build the professional capacity of employers to recruit and on-board student talent. Further, DTCC staff will help to coordinate the supply and demand of WBL opportunities to ensure a variety of early career experiences are available to all students.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4 – SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO GROWTH OVER TIME

Currently, there are approximately 2,000 students who participate in cooperative education. In order to achieve an annual goal (by school year 2018-19) of 8,000 students in “career immersion” experiences, we will need to dramatically increase student work placement over the next three years. Plans for sustainability will also be central to the implementation of this effort. Through the 2016-17 CTE Cadre, the Department of Education will build and vet policy and procedures to scale WBL. At the same time, DTCC staff will begin work as the statewide workforce intermediary. State policy and professional routines will be field-tested through a series of pilots in specific career pathways. As needs arise and resource requirements surface, the Department will seek feedback from LEA staff to resolve these issues. Collectively, we will ensure that all students have the opportunity to pursue early career experiences and that we coordinate activities and professional learning at the state and county level, while also building employer champions for long-term advocacy and success of statewide WBL system.