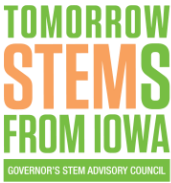


Sioux Center Community School District

Work-Based Learning Plan

April 2023



MISSION:

The mission of the Sioux Center Community School District is to “Educate the Whole Student for a Whole Lifetime”.

VISION:

Our vision is that all policies, programs, and practices of the Sioux Center Community School District will reflect our commitment to educating a whole student for a whole lifetime. This includes preparing all students for college, career, life, and learning beyond our school walls. We will provide them with skills, experiences, and content knowledge so they are able to thrive in our ever changing world.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE:

All graduates of Sioux Center Community School District will develop and possess essential skills that will prepare them for their future beyond our school walls. These skills include productive collaboration, skilled communication, community & cultural connections, creativity & innovation, health & wellness, and determined & empowered learning.

COMMITMENTS:

1. We will practice maximizing every individual learner’s potential in order to achieve the shared vision of our school.
2. We will provide supportive learning environments that engage in regular and specific reflective practice, assessment, and feedback around progress toward our school’s shared vision. This allows us to remain accountable to improvement in learning and leading.
3. Curriculum and instruction design and delivery will address intentional development of competencies and standards both in academic content areas and in the Portrait of a Graduate vision to prepare students for college, career, life, and learning beyond our school walls.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Sioux Center is a growing community with a wide range of business and industry. As many rural communities, we continue to face workforce shortages, and as a district and community, we believe the best employees are right now in our schools. Therefore, our goal is to expose our students to as many career opportunities as possible within our community and local area.

As a district, we also strive every day to help our students understand how the content in their classes will be linked to their future careers. Exposing our students to those in our community who are currently using this content knowledge is a valuable part of helping our students see and understand the value of their learning beyond the classroom. We also strive to give students opportunities to apply their learning to real-world problems and experiences. This makes their learning relevant and engaging.

Finally, we believe that we need to do our part in preparing students for their future beyond our school walls. Therefore, along with our community, we have developed our Portrait of a Graduate which identifies six important competencies for every student’s development and future success. Daily we work to foster within our students the ability to collaborate productively and communicate effectively. We encourage them to make

connections with our community and a variety of cultures. We give them the opportunity to be creative and innovative. We support them in being healthy and well, and all of this is done while teaching them to be determined and empowered learners.

This work-based learning plan will expose all students PK-12 to a wide variety of careers throughout their school career and give them opportunities to experience those careers in meaningful ways. It will also give all students the opportunity to develop valuable skills that will prepare them for success in life and career beyond our school walls.

Delivery Model: ([Link to overview by grade level](#))

Using the four phases of the Iowa Work-Based Learning Experience Continuum, this section will be used to communicate both our current reality, as well as the future plans/"dreams" we have for work-based learning in our district:

1. Career Awareness: This phase takes place mostly within our classrooms through connections to our curriculum and content, such as classroom speakers and intentional connections teachers make between classroom learning and different careers. The following are additional opportunities that we either currently offer or hope to offer in the future:
 - a. K-5 (Kinsey & intermediate school):
 - Junior Achievement curriculum: We are currently researching a partnership with Junior Achievement who provides a career awareness and readiness curriculum that partners local business and industry professionals with K-8 classrooms. These professionals volunteer to facilitate, with the support of a teacher, the delivery of lessons that allow students to participate in simulations of different careers.
 - Business partners: In the past, each grade-level has been partnered with a local business. Activities with the business partner, included having employees of the business volunteer in classrooms and taking students on a tour of the business. Our plan is to make these partnerships more substantive by finding specific connections to classroom content and curriculum to allow the business employees to come in and make authentic connections with what is being learned in the classroom and how it might be used in a career. We would also like to create real-world problem and solution challenges with the business partner. Again, we would find a content or curriculum connection and develop age-appropriate problems that could be posed to the students. The students would then "pitch" their solutions to the business partner. This would expose students to some of the problems that may occur within different careers and allow them to practice the skill of problem solving at an early age.
 - b. Middle School:
 - Junior Achievement curriculum and activities: All 6-8 students participate in a variety of exploratory classes. The middle school counselor, along with local business professionals, will implement [It's My Future](#) (8th), [Inspire \(Career & Professional Skills Expo\)](#) (7th), and [Economics for Success](#) (6th) to expose middle school students to the variety of careers available and the skills necessary to be successful in a future career.
 - College Visit: Our 8th grade students will have an opportunity to visit our local college (Dordt University) to learn about the college experience, careers available (including the ProTech options), and reflect on how their experience informs/impacts their career choices and class decisions as they prepare for high school.
 - STEM exploratory: Our 7th and 8th grade students participate in a six-week STEM exploratory. Students are exposed to different STEM activities. Next year, we will make students aware of the different careers that are represented through the different STEM activities and skills, and then bring in business/industry professionals to talk about how they use those skills in their career.

- 8th grade exploratory weekly career speakers: Because there are six weeks in each exploratory cycle, once a week a representative with a career in each of the six Iowa CTE service areas will speak to the class. This will introduce the students to the six CTE service areas and allow them to reflect on which ones align with their interests and inform their decision making when they register for high school classes.
- c. High School:
 - Lunch & Learn: This would be a new addition to our plan. Bi-monthly local business or industry professionals would be available during the student lunch times to highlight various career fields and make students aware of high demand jobs, associated training/education, and a connection between careers and current learning experiences.
 - CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) career interviews: This class for juniors and seniors offers students the opportunity to explore careers that are aligned to their skills and interests. The students choose three careers, and then set up and conduct interviews with individuals who are currently working in their chosen careers. These interviews include learning more about the day-to-day of the career and the training and education necessary to secure employment in that career.
 - Exploring Careers class: This class is offered to all 9-12 students. It exposes students to a wide variety of careers through local business and industry partners. These partners commit to a week or two of class time, and throughout the week, different employees come in to talk about their career within the company. At the end of the week or two, the students are able to tour the business/industry they have been learning about.

2. Career Exploration

- a. Kinsey (K-4):
 - Kinsey Career Day: This is a day dedicated to self- and career-exploration. Students will participate in several self-discovery activities to learn more about how their personalities and passions align with different careers. Students will also have the opportunity to interact with local business professionals and reflect on how the careers align with what they have learned about themselves.
- b. Intermediate School (4-5):
 - Business/Industry Tours: Each year, students will visit a different local business/industry each quarter. The business/industry will engage students in an activity that allows students to experience some of the work done in that business, and business professionals will share with students how the Portrait of a Graduate competencies are used in the daily work they do.
- c. Middle School (6-8):
 - NCC Career Day: 8th grade students participate in a career day hosted by Northwest Iowa Community College. The day includes a keynote speaker and opportunity to learn about careers during breakout sessions led by regional business and industry professionals.
- d. High School:
 - ICAP Day: This day is set aside for students to take a college visit, participate in a job shadow, and tour various local businesses/industries.

- Your Future @ Work: This event for sophomores is hosted by local economic development and chambers of commerce along with representatives from NCC.
 - CTE Booster Showcase: Our district has a CTE booster club which is a group of local businesses and industries who have committed funds to support our students in the area of CTE. This booster club has also requested to have additional exposure to our students to allow our students to learn more about their business/industry and to learn about the careers that are available. This showcase will start with students researching one of the businesses/industries who are involved, then they will spend 30 minutes visiting with the participating businesses/industries, and finally, they will reflect in their classes the next day on how the learning in their class might relate to the businesses/industries they visited with.
 - CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) projects: Teams of students work with a local business/industry/organization on a project that will have positive impact and benefit for both the team of students and the local business/industry/organization. These projects are developed by identifying a need or problem that the business/industry/organization has and allowing students to find and carry out solutions to the problems or need.
- e. District-Wide:
- Authentic Projects: Our career & community connections coach will work with teachers to identify curriculum connections where local businesses could work with groups of students on authentic projects. The goal is to engage at least one class per quarter in an authentic project. The [Iowa Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning](#) will be used to brainstorm, identify, and house potential projects.

3. Career Preparation:

- a. Portrait of a Graduate: Our portrait of a graduate was developed with the input of local business leaders. They communicated a need for future employees to embody the six identified competencies, and our commitment as a district is to provide every student the opportunity to grow these competencies which are vital to future career and life success. Business and industry partners are often brought into the school to talk about how the competencies are used daily within their business.
- b. Middle School Career Event: This event would expose students to a variety of professional skills, CTE opportunities and offerings, and local business representatives from all six of the Iowa CTE Service Areas. Students will use their professional skills to interact with and informally “interview” the business representatives. During this time they will also be able to participate in activities that represent the CTE classes they can take in high school.
- c. CTE Student Organizations: Our district offers four different CTESO’s. Currently there are not any work-based learning opportunities included in these organizations. In the future, development of these opportunities could include professional skills development and career preparation workshops.
 - FBLA
 - FCCLA
 - FFA

■ Skills USA

- d. Warrior Media & CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies): These classes offered to juniors and seniors provide training in professional skills, including interviewing skills, professional dress and behavior, and giving and receiving actionable feedback. These skills are then practiced when students work with businesses and organizations within our community on authentic projects.

4. Career Training:

- a. Internships: Valuable learning experiences and information can be obtained on the work site through the expertise of local business and industry leaders. Every senior is eligible to request a work site in his/her intended career major area. Career Internship is a one period block (or two if study hall time is used) available during the first or second semester of the senior year. Evaluation is based on general work skill criteria and specific competencies as developed through a cooperative effort between the business/industry and the school. Administrative approval is necessary to participate in the program. Students must have completed a job shadow during the junior year in order to participate.
- b. Apprenticeships: Although there are currently not many options for apprenticeships, we are in the process of developing one with Interstates in Sioux Center. We will also continue to research the possibility of adding additional apprenticeship opportunities.
- c. Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC) Career Academy: NCC will be opening in a career academy in Sioux Center fall of 2023. Our students will have easy access to this academy. Programs include: education, engineering design, health careers, and welding. Juniors and seniors will have the opportunity to attend the career academy to receive dual credit and finish high school with a certification and the option of continuing their education to work toward a two- or four-year degree.

Staffing:

Beginning next year, we are adding a Community & Career Connections Coach who will oversee our work-based learning programs and curriculum connections. This person will be the primary point of contact for work-based learning. She will also develop additional WBL opportunities for students and improve those already in place. She will work alongside the high school counselors in placing students in appropriate experiences aligned with their future career goals.

Community & Career Connections Coach	Jill Harskamp (jill.harskamp@scwarriors.org)
High School Counselors	Julie Oldenkamp (julie.oldenkamp@scwarriors.org) Grant Willits (grant.willits@scwarriors.org)
NCC Intermediary	Allie Unrau
AEA Future Ready Consultants	Jordan Menning & Mark Shea

Individual Career and Academic Plan ICAP Utilization:

Please see the [Sioux Center DCAP/ICAP](#) for additional information.

Costs & Funding:

1. STEM BEST grant - We have relied quite heavily for the last two years on our STEM BEST grant for some start up costs of newly created WBL programs.
2. CTE booster club: A number of local business and industry partners have joined our newly formed CTE booster club. Each of them has pledged various sums of money over the next three years to support expansion of our CTE and WBL programs.
3. School support - The school has also incurred some of the expenses, especially the cost associated with the addition of the community & career connections coach.

Professional Development:

There are currently no formal plans for professional development other than increased awareness for teachers of the opportunities that are available for our students. In the fall, we hope to spend time with teachers outlining the three parts that are required for a career activity to be considered a work-based learning experience (academic preparation, career experience, opportunities for student reflection). We also hope to share the WBL plan with them to get them excited about partnering with the Career & Community Connections Coach to develop more substantive curriculum connections and possibly integrate some authentic projects into their curriculum. Portrait of a Graduate will also continue to be an area of emphasis for our professional development which will also provide opportunities for teachers to help students develop skills that will be essential for success in their future careers.

Perkins Alignment:

Currently Sioux Center CSD does not use any Perkins funding toward work-based learning. There have been discussions about how some of that money might possibly be used in the future to further develop some of our work-based learning opportunities, but at this time, Perkins funding is not being used.

Community Assets:

1. Sioux Center Chamber of Commerce: Our chamber has been a strong supporter of any work Sioux Center does concerning work-based learning. Barb Den Herder, Chamber CEO, has been an advocate for our WBL opportunities and provides support for our programs in many ways, including facilitating contacts with local business and industry, offering opportunities to present WBL opportunities at Chamber meetings, and being a thought partner in the development of additional WBL opportunities.
2. Local business partners: Local businesses and industry are strong supporters of our programs through their participation in authentic WBL projects, providing internship opportunities, and sharing about their careers and the opportunities available within their business/industry.
3. Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC): NCC offers various opportunities for students to take classes to prepare students for their future career, as well as the new NCC Career Academy, that will be available for our students.

Challenges & Barriers:

1. **Competing Priorities:** There is a lot of very good work being done in the Sioux Center CSD, but it is difficult to give the time and attention necessary to make all of the competing initiatives/programs/etc the very best they can be. The district made a commitment to this work by creating the position of Career & Community Connections Coach, so hopefully that will be the impetus for making WBL a priority in our district.
2. **Student Schedules:** Sioux Center students have many valuable opportunities, including a wide variety of electives along with high expectations for required classes and credit for graduation. Therefore, finding time in students' schedules to participate in time intensive WBL opportunities is often very difficult.
3. **College Credits:** Sioux Center students have the opportunity to receive college credits through NCC, and often students and parents prioritize college credit over WBL opportunities; therefore, it is difficult to get students to take advantage of WBL opportunities.
4. **Funding:** High quality WBL programs require funding, so identifying opportunities for additional funding will be necessary in the future as we are in our last year of the STEM BEST grant.