

Waterloo Schools Work-Based Learning Model

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Work-based learning consists of structured opportunities for learning and is achieved through authentic activity and is supervised in the workplace. Work-based learning is delivered through a meaningful partnership between students, employers and the education organization.

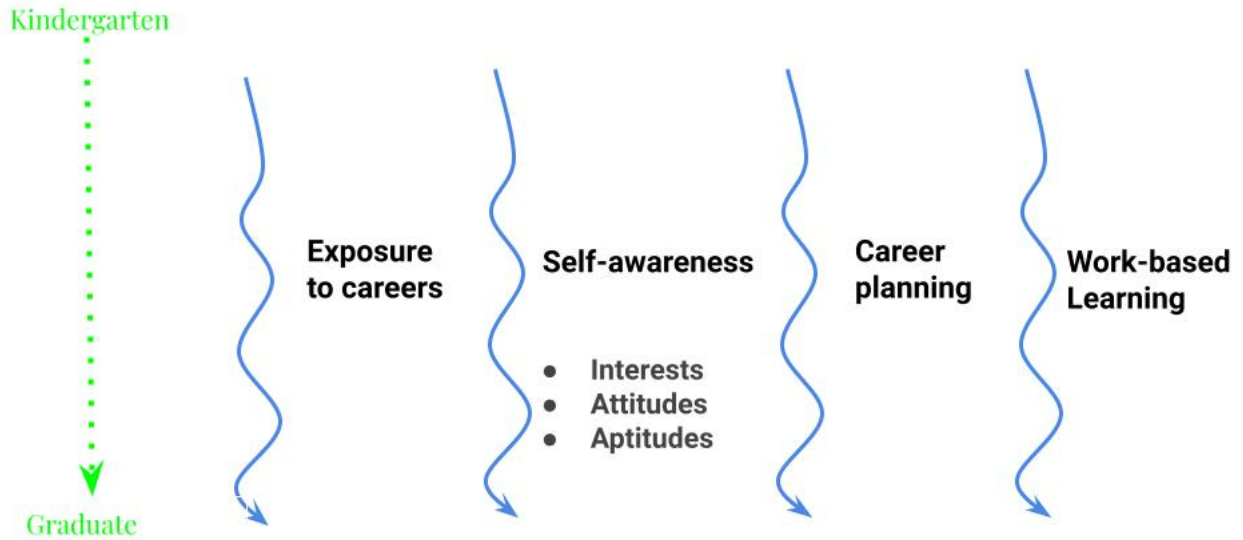
Work-based learning incorporates academic knowledge, technical skills, and professional skills to enhance the real-life work experience. WBL programs partner with businesses to satisfy the industry requirement for skilled and talented professionals while also meeting the needs of the students desire to work within a field of interest. WBL programs are targeted to bridge the gap between the learning and the doing.

Before a student in the Waterloo Schools begins a work-based learning experience, they have gone through a comprehensive K-12 career exposure and exploration process to help them find their passion. By doing this, we are able to match their passion with an appropriate work-based learning experience.

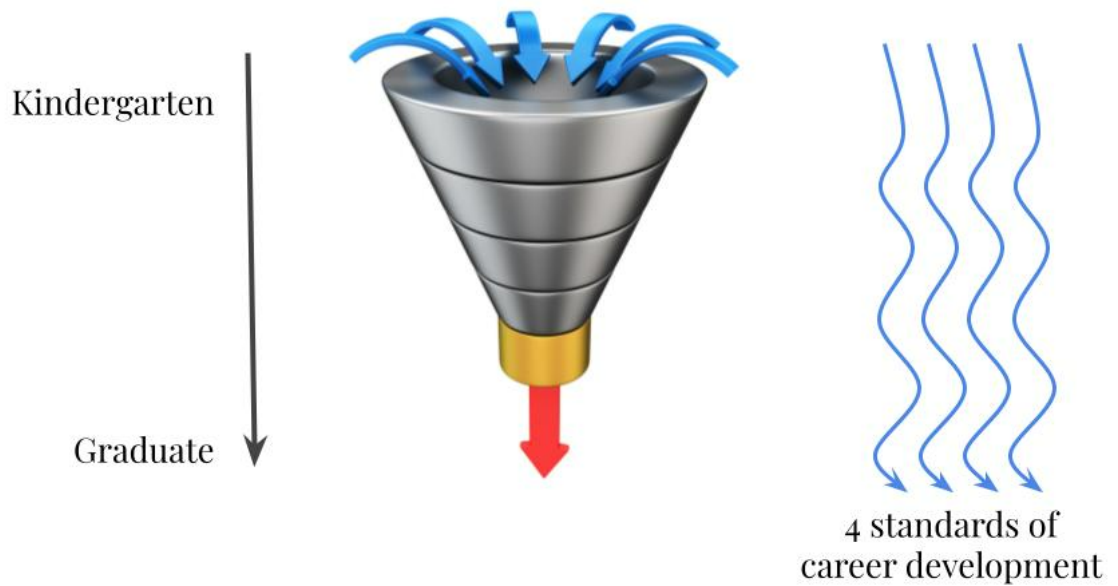
The following is a detailed breakdown of the pathway that all students follow to help them graduate with a “Diploma and a Plan” from the Waterloo Schools. This plan is broken down into 5 essential components.

Component I- Exposure and Exploration
K-12 Career Development

4 standards of career development



Waterloo Schools Career Development Model



LifeLabs Experiences

One part of the K-12 exposure and exploration of potential careers is our LifeLabs program. This program is run at every grade level, K-12, and every student in the Waterloo Schools will participate in this experience, every year they are in the district. By exposing students to a multitude of careers and experiences, our students begin to narrow the focus of their interests and help them begin to start making decisions about what they may want to pursue for career options after graduation.

[LifeLabs at a Glance](#)

[LifeLabs Website](#)

Middle School Exploratory Experiences

After a student is finished with their elementary school years, they truly begin to take deeper dives into careers, culminating with them creating their 4-year plan for high school and tentatively laying out their pathway with robust conversations with their counselors. Part of this process includes our Middle School Exploratory experience. During a student's six semesters of middle school, they have one course that is specifically tied to careers in each of the 6 Service Areas, defined by Iowa Bureau of Career and Technical Education. These 6 areas include:

- a. Agriculture
- b. Business
- c. Health
- d. Human Services
- e. Information Technology
- f. Manufacturing and the Trades

Here is a list of our specific middle school exploratory experiences. (NOTE- we will be adding Agriculture and Horticulture to our programming at the Waterloo Career Center for the 2023-2024 school year. At that time we will be adding CASE curriculum tied to Agriculture and eliminating one of our IT courses and replacing with an iCev comprehensive IT course)

[Middle School Exploratory](#)

8th and 9th Grades

During both their 8th and 9th grade years, all students will participate in our Career Inspire program. This event looks at multiple careers within each of the 6 Services areas. This program is a Junior Achievement program, but is supported by many businesses and industries in the Cedar Valley (Waterloo/Cedar Falls metroplex) This event was first held in Cedar Rapids and will be held for the first time for Waterloo students this coming Fall. Here is an example of what the experience will look like:

[Career Inspire- Fall 2021](#)



Component II- LifeLabs Work-Based Experience

As mentioned above, LifeLabs is an essential part of the Waterloo Schools exposing students to a multitude of career opportunities. As the students progress through their K-12 experience, the focus begins to narrow and begins including more work-based learning experiences. The first such experience is the 10th Grade LifeLab experience which is a required ½ day job shadowing experience for every Waterloo Schools student. We have over 100 businesses that help place our near 600 students for this half-day experience, which is tied to their interests and passion, as identified by their Four-Year plan. This is also tracked closely by using our student management system of Xello. This coming Fall will be the first time that our students will be doing this experience. The Governor is so excited about this plan, she is coming up for our November 9th day.

10th Grade	Life Lab - Work Based Experience 1) WCC in Oct/Nov 2) UNI/CTE Mar 3		Service Learning
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Component III- Job Shadowing Experience through Cedar Valley Career Connections

After doing their first job shadowing experience in LifeLabs, the students now will have an opportunity to take deeper dives into true work-based learning experiences. The first of these is another Job Shadowing experience as part of our district-wide Work-based Learning program. We work with our local intermediary, Cedar Valley Career Connections, to place our students. Last year we had over 800 students do a job shadow experience. Here is a list of career opportunities that students can pursue:

[Job Shadowing Opportunities](#)

Prior to Experience, the student will:

- a. Have completed all Career Interests components within Xello
- b. Have completed their 8th Grade Plan (ICAP)
- c. Have identified a Career Interest area
- d. Have taken at least one high school course within this Career Service Area

Component IV- Paid Internship Experience (100 hours)

- First 20 hours are unpaid and probationary
- Next 80 hours are paid by the district at \$10.00 per hour

NOTE- this is paid for through monies that we have received to support our WBL program from businesses in the Cedar Valley, recognizing the importance of having a lower-level internship experience where they can hone their skills, improve their professional skills, and become better prepared for their next work experience, whether that is our next tier of WBL, or a job that they secure on their own.

Prior to the Experience, the student will:

- a. Have shown interest in this area on their career inventory within Xello
- b. Taken at least 3 courses that pertain to this pathway (A combination of their home high school and the Waterloo Career Center. At least one of the three must have been taken at the Waterloo Career Center
- c. Attend WBL Orientation.
- d. Complete a rough draft of a resume
- e. Do an interview (mock) with the business partner
- f. Complete WCSD Application
[Application](#)
- g. Meet with WBL Coordinator (When position is filled) and review/complete the Training Agreement, W4 (state and federal), Direct Deposit form, and I-9.

Requirements during internship:

- a. Parent and Student attend that semester's conferences to meet with the WBL Coordinator
- b. Complete monthly assignments as posted on Google Classroom. Review feedback from WBL Coordinator and modify assignments.
- c. Satisfactory or exemplar evaluations at mid-term, quarter, and finals.
- d. Monthly check-ins with the WBL Coordinator (more if needed)
- e. Attendance at all four in-person class times. (Those will be set after the beginning of the semester)
- f. Satisfactory attendance at job-site/placement.

Examples of Required Monthly Activities:

- a. Business Research

- b. Continued Resume Work
- c. Interview questions/answers
- d. Cover letter work
- e. Continued Mock interviews (Practice makes perfect)
- f. Reflections on experience

By the end of the Semester the Student will:

- a. Have completed
- b. A completed cover letter
- c. An updated/completed resume
- d. At least one reference letter
- e. Participated in mock interviews

Component V- Paid Internship/Quality Pre Apprenticeship (QPA)/Registered Apprenticeship (RAP)

Prior to the Experience, the student will:

- a. Have completed Components I-IV successfully
- b. Meet the guidelines and requirements of the Department of Labor, as tied to QPA's and/or RAP's.

Profile of a Student

A key part of our Work-based Learning experience is to define all the expectations for a student in each of the key components. We also outline the expectations or wishes from the participating business partner. This will help alleviate any confusion or unreal expectations on both sides. Here is a list of the expectations for both.

Profile of a Student- Component I

- All students in grades K-12

Profile of a Student- Component II

- All 10th grade students

Profile of a Student- Component III

- Is a high school student
- Meets all of the expectations of required within Component III

Profile of a Student- Component IV

In order to apply for a Component IV Internship, the student must:

1. Completed a Component III experience

2. Have completed 3 courses within this career field, including at least one at the Waterloo Career Center
3. Have completed a beginning resume
4. Do a “mock” interview with the business

As a business partner, you can expect the following of the student

- Note- expected proficiency is listed on a 1-10 scale

Student will have the following technical skills: (3-5)

- Will be defined by the sponsoring company

Student will have the following professional skills: (3-5)

- Will be defined by the sponsoring company

Student will have the following certifications: (N/A)

- Will be defined by the sponsoring company

Goals for the student: (These will be personalized)

1. XXXX
2. XXXX
3. XXXX

Goals of the participating business

1. Help upskill the students technical skills within this field
2. Help the student to continue to grow their professional skills
3. Give critical feedback
4. Work closely with our Work-Based Learning Coordinator

Profile of a Student- Component V

These are the same as Component IV, other than they must have completed Component IV AND they must follow all the rules and regulations of the Department of Labor if it is a Quality Pre-Apprenticeship (QPA) and/or a Registered Apprenticeship (RAP)

A key piece of each and every component is the onboarding that will take place between our Work-based Learning Coordinator and our students, instructors, and our business partners. That is why we have created “Profiles of a Student” and “Profiles of a Business”, so that everyone is on the same page. This onboarding process will lead to a smooth transition and a more meaningful experience for all involved. We learned this the hard way in the fact that a few of our first placements did not go as well because neither the student nor the business knew what to expect, or worse yet, they had different expectations, leading to miscommunication and an experience that was not as positive as it should have been.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

The Waterloo Schools are transitioning from having their Work-Based Learning program run by individual MOC's in each of their traditional high schools and the Waterloo Career Center, to a universal WBL program run by a Work-Based Learning Coordinator. This transition will take place during the 2022-23 school year. Here is a job description for the WBL position:

[Work-Based Learning Specialist](#)

This position is part of the comprehensive K-12 Career Development programs that the district uses to ensure the vital exposure and experiences for students to make choices about their future. The district has hired a distinct position to oversee this overarching area of focus. Here is the job description for the K-12 Career Development Director:

[Director of K-12 Career Development](#)

Along with that, we have a Career Coordinator that will work with our WBL Specialist on placements and all appropriate paperwork. Other supports within the district would include:

- Career and College Transition Counselor (CCTC)
- High School Counselors
- High School and WCC Administrators
- High School Multi-Occupations Career (MOC) coordinators
- Instructor

These positions are all funded by the district.

To ensure that we have a successful Work-based Learning program, the participation of our community is essential. We have over 100 official and unofficial sponsors who help us successfully operate our program. This includes participating businesses in our Career Inspire program, our 10th Grade Work-based Learning experience, and our Level 1 & 2 work-based learning experiences. (Components 4 and 5)

Our work-based learning plan aligns with our Perkins grant and was the number one priority of our Comprehensive Learn Needs Assessment (CLNA), as identified by our business partners, instructors, administrators, counselors, and community. Here is a link for the survey we sent to our many constituents, with this one being to the Counselors:

[CLNA Survey- Priorities](#)

They all recognized the need for helping create the next generation of workers.

Another piece of our CLNA report, which is a required process that you must complete before writing your Perkins grant application, we have the executive summary for the district. One of the four priorities for the district was work-based learning. Here is a copy of that summary:

[CLNA Executive Summary](#)

This was also one of the three priorities for our regional Regional Planning Partnership (RPP) group, comprising 32 districts.

As with anything, there are still challenges and barriers to growth and understanding about work-based learning. Some of the biggest challenges we face include:

- 1) Creating a process that works best to maximize the number of students in the program.
 - This is a continued challenge. Even though we feel our process is good, it is not great! That is why I am excited to see and hear what others are doing around this very important topic.
- 2) Regulations regarding the need for an MOC.
 - We are lucky as a large district to have an MOC. With that said, the requirement that the coordinator be an MOC can and is limiting. Right now we are trying to fill our Work-based Learning Coordinator position and one of the hangups continues to be the requirement for an MOC. We have outstanding candidates that would do an absolutely amazing job in this role, but cannot hire without the MOC. It would be great if the state government could ease off some of the limitations and restrictions that are placed around WBL.
- 3) Businesses available or willing to take on a placement.
 - As I stated earlier, we do have over 100 official and unofficial business partners that are willing to collaborate with us on various pieces of work-based learning. With that said, we see more participation in certain sectors compared to others. This can be limiting when we have a student that may want a placement in an area that we just don't have a business to place them in.
 - We have many (most) businesses that will accept a placement for a student when we are footing the bill. (See Component IV) The problem is that there are some businesses that want workers and are having difficulty filling positions, but when they have an opportunity to hire a student for a work-based learning placement, they resist that because the onus is on them for payment.
- 4) Educating our Counselors about the importance of Work-based Learning.

- This is a big one for many students. Counselors are the gatekeepers for our students, scheduling them into the courses that they want or need, but they are also the influencers in regards to students about courses that they take or can take, and opportunities that are out there for growth. Some counselors will still schedule a student in an academic class over a work-based learning opportunity, thinking that there is more growth in the classroom than in an actual, real-life learning opportunity. We continually are working with our counselors to change this paradigm.

5) Student Awareness

- Again, much like the Counselors, students don't know what they don't know. It is imperative that we continue to work with our students to show them how a WBL opportunity gives them a foot up and a competitive advantage over other students that don't take advantage of these great opportunities.

In closing, this is just one model of how work-based learning is being done, with this one within the Waterloo Schools. There are a multitude of models out there that work, and maybe work better. I think each district has their own unique niche qualities and needs, which is why even with 9 models out there, it is essential that each district look at a model and figure out which one, or which pieces from multiple ones, fits best for their individual district.