

About This Toolkit

The NYC Department of Education’s Work-Based Learning Toolkit was developed to assist school leadership, work-based learning coordinators¹, teachers and their intermediary partners in designing, implementing and supporting quality Work-Based Learning activities for high-school students. The toolkit is aligned with the Domains of College and Career Readiness and is intended to support larger school-wide efforts of graduating students ready for postsecondary pathways and careers.

Why Work-Based Learning?

There are one million middle skills jobs in New York City and 46% of New Yorkers lack the skills to fill them. These are occupations that require education after high school but not a four-year degree. By 2020, 65% of *all* jobs will require some postsecondary education or training. There are significant skills gaps facing New York City’s fastest-growing industries and this will only continue to grow without comprehensive interventions.² Work-based learning activities that help students make informed choices, plan their educational pathway and provide actionable steps to take after high school are vital to student achievement and ultimately a positive connection to the labor force.

The NYC Department of Education’s approach in supporting students in career-related programs of study is the deliberate focus on the three facets of student achievement needed for success in the labor force: the acquisition of academic, technical and core employability skills. Regardless of industry, employers consistently underscore that students must have experience and mastery in all three areas, with a growing priority on the development of employability skills. Alongside efforts to enhance the rigor and effectiveness of classroom instruction, new approaches are required to deliver authentic workplace experiences such as Guest Speakers, Career Days, Career Mentoring, Workplace Tours, Informational Interviews, Job Shadowing, Mock Interviews, Workplace Challenges, Internships and Work Experiences in partnership with employers. This toolkit has been developed to help schools and their intermediary and employer partners deliver educationally rich and authentic experiences across the work-based learning continuum.

This toolkit was developed by a team of department leadership, work-based learning coordinators and staff from Grant Associates. Representatives of six intermediary organizations participating in the department’s CTE Industry Scholars Program reviewed and provided comment on drafts.

The audience for this toolset is primarily NYC DOE school staff, work-based learning coordinators and liaisons, intermediary agency staff, teachers and program staff responsible for designing and delivering work-based learning opportunities to students in New York.

Participation in enhanced WBL activities will increase teacher and school awareness of the issues facing industry, and facilitate a robust and practical connection between the NYC schools and an expanded base of employer partners. Employers will be able to effectively engage with education and help support the development of their future workforce, and an increased number of students will be aware of, have experience in and be prepared for the careers of the future.

¹ In New York State, this includes certified work-based learning coordinators and others who facilitate, arrange and support work-based learning activities for students.

² Adapted from the Career Month Site Coordinator Toolkit, NYC Department of Education, Office of Post-Secondary Readiness, January 2017

What's Inside the WBL Toolkit?

The toolkit is designed as a Work-Based Learning implementation guide for New York City schools and their partners. It provides an overview of work-based learning, activity guides and support materials for each WBL activity, and collection of program fact sheets and support tools.

Work-Based Learning Overview

Four documents provide a foundation for creating and implementing high-quality Work-Based Learning activities for NYC high school students. They include the following:

Quality Work-Based Learning: provides an introduction to the principles of Quality Work-Based Learning and lays the foundation for developing any Work-Based Learning experience. Includes definitional standards for WBL and describes the benefits of participation to students, schools, employers and community.

The Work-Based Learning Continuum: a definition of the continuum of Career Awareness, Career Exploration and Career Preparation and the identification of the range of Work-Based Learning activities across the continuum—whether conducted in the classroom, the workplace or community.

Work-Based Learning Essential Elements: the essential design elements to be applied to support and enhance the implementation and educational value of any WBL experience.

The Top 10 Core Employability Skills: adopted from MHA Labs, identifies the skills to be taught and demonstrated through any WBL experience. Mastering these skills, combined with meeting the necessary academic and occupational skill requirements for a particular job or position, indicates that the student is ready for a successful transition to work.

Work-Based Learning Activity Guides

The toolkit includes WBL activity implementation guides to help New York City schools and their employer partners design, structure and support effective and learning-rich work-based learning activities for students. Each guide includes an activity fact sheet, plus checklists for teachers, students and employer partners, as well as a fact sheet for employer decision-makers. Required forms and a set of sample implementation tools are also provided.

Activity Guides are provided for the following activities:

- Guest Speakers
- Career Days
- Career Mentoring
- Workplace Tours
- Informational Interviews
- Job Shadowing
- Mock Interviews
- Workplace Challenges
- Internships
- Work Experiences

Implementation Tools and Fact Sheets

A collection of universal WBL tools and Program Fact Sheets to support Work-Based Learning in the NYC schools.