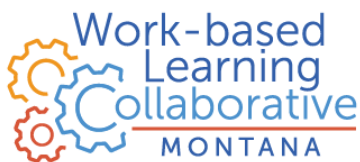




February 2026

Collaborative Partner News

The Work-based Learning Collaborative includes 30 partner organizations that cover the gamut of work-based learning from the student, employer, and educator perspectives, as well as direct-service, capacity, and policy levels. We are proud to share highlights of our WBLC partners - state agencies, industry associations, colleges, high schools, and nonprofit organizations. Find the list of the WBLC members [here!](#)



We need your help

Employer Workforce Satisfaction Survey

Dates: Jan 1 - March 31, 2026

Who should take it: Someone familiar with your employee recruitment and retention practices and needs (i.e. HR or management).

How long: It should take about 20 minutes.

What we will do with your data:

Your responses will inform the work of WBLC, partners, and policymakers. We publish aggregate data (never individual data) on the WBLC Data Dashboard (wblmt.org).

What you get out of it: The data will be used to improve workforce supports, work-based learning, and education opportunities so you gain skilled workers.

Montana Employers

We want to learn about your recent experience recruiting, retaining talent, and your interest in work-based learning.

Scan the QR code to fill out the Employer Workplace Satisfaction Survey.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JG5SDDL>



Learn more about us at wblmt.org

Complete the survey [here](#). Curious about the results from 2024? [Check them out here!](#)

The Work-based Learning Collaborative is hiring a **VISTA volunteer!**

[Learn more](#)

Please help spread the word.



Teacher Externship applications
open through **March 1**

Apply Now!



**Employer
Lunch n' Learns**



Empowering Employers of Youth and Young Adults

Learn More

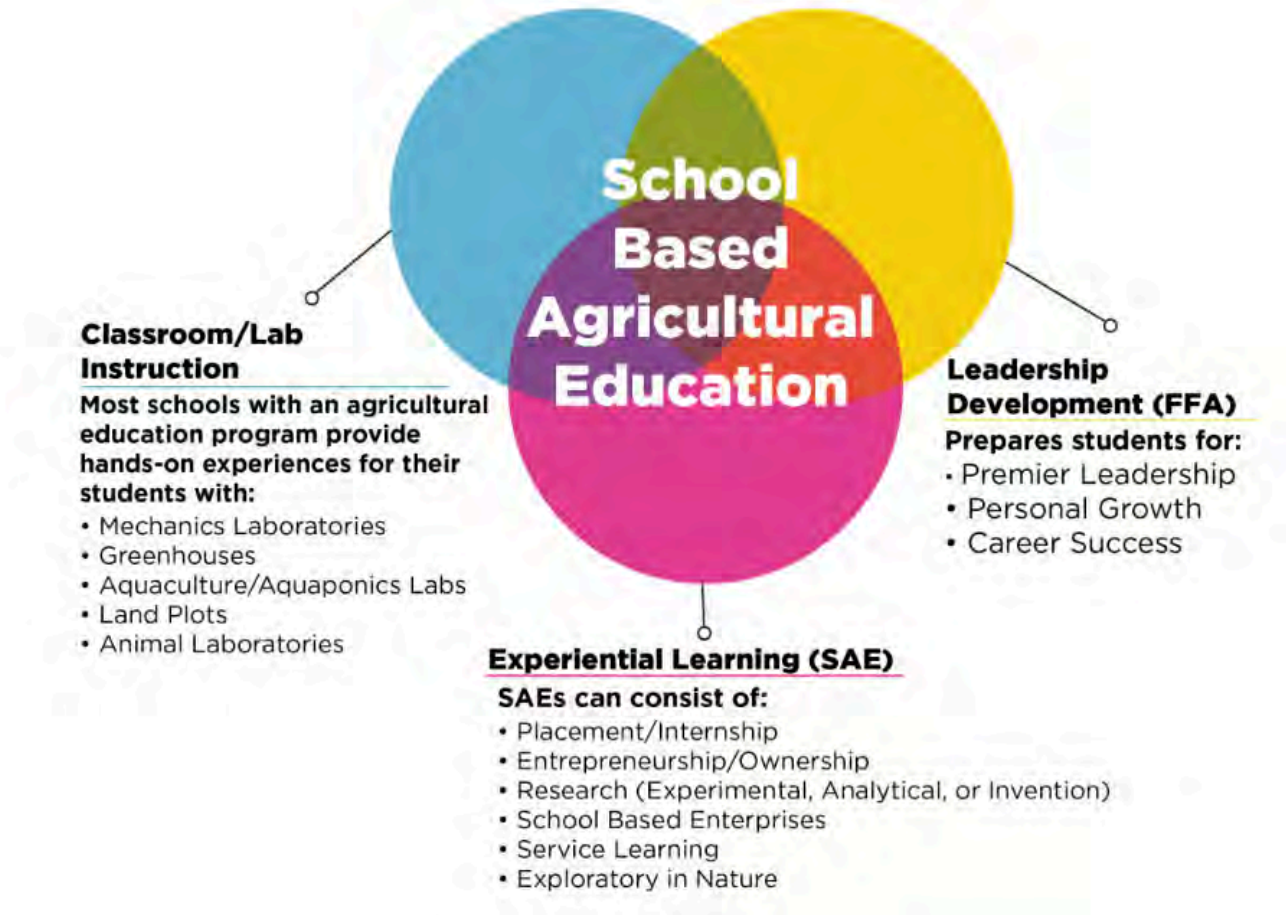
February is Career & Technical Education (CTE) Month!

Shannon Boswell, Office of Public Instruction

CTE Month may be the 28 days of February that we purposefully celebrate **Career and Technical Education**, but it creates an impact in students' lives 365 days a year. Our CTE teachers are taking the academic principles that students learn in class and creating a real-world environment to apply them. Often students don't see the reading, math, science, and art that is happening all around them. Through rigorous CTE courses and programs, students can gain workforce competencies, industry recognized credentials, leadership development, and life-ready skills that they will carry with them no matter what field or industry they end up in. CTE is helping to prepare students for the rapidly changing workforce. Our team at the Office of Public Instruction is happy to celebrate and support the 600 plus Career and Technical Education Teachers, Career and Technical Student Organization Advisors, and programs across Montana.

Montana Agriculture Education & FFA

Agricultural Education, for grades 7-12, is designed to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences in and about agriculture. Ag Ed prepares students for further education, self-employment, entry-level jobs, and consumer awareness in the agriculture industry. Most programs consist of three major components: classroom and laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experiences (SAE) and membership in the FFA. You can see data on participation and the economic impact of the Ag Ed program in Montana 2024-25.



The Prospects 2026: Call for Virtual Judges

Hosted by [Montana Chamber Foundation](#), The Prospects is a virtual, statewide entrepreneurship and workforce competition offering cash prizes, scholarships and mentorship opportunities to K-12 Montana students with new or existing business ideas and innovations. The competition is designed to find, celebrate, and reward promising students by giving them the opportunity to showcase their entrepreneurial mindset and real-world problem-solving skills. The Montana Chamber Foundation connects students with business leaders from across the state.

Judges will virtually review a minimum of 5 submissions. The total time commitment is less than 2 hours over a 10-day period, allowing you to judge at your own pace. If you are interested in serving as a judge, please complete this [Google Form](#).

To learn more, contact Workforce Strategists [Tiana Yates](#) or [James Easton](#).

Knowledge Nugget

The [Future of Jobs Report](#), by the World Economic Forum shares vital information like the infographic below. Curious about fastest growing jobs? The impact of AI? How employees think about well-being? Check out more infographics [here!](#)



Core skills in 2025

-  **Analytical thinking**
-  **Resilience, flexibility and agility**
-  **Leadership and social influence**
-  **Creative thinking**
-  **Motivation and self-awareness**
-  **Technological literacy**
-  **Empathy and active listening**
-  **Curiosity and lifelong learning**
-  **Talent management**
-  **Service orientation and customer service**

 Cognitive skills  Self-efficacy  Working with others  Management skills  Technology skills  Engagement skills

Note: The skills selected by surveyed organizations to be of greatest importance to workers at the time of the survey.

Source: World Economic Forum. (2025). *Future of Jobs Report 2025*.



Resources

[Code Girls United's Artificial Intelligence Academy](#) is a series of videos that guide you into the world of Artificial Intelligence. Each video builds your skills a little more, showing how AI works, how machines learn, and why responsible, unbiased technology matters. Along the way, you'll try fun hands-on activities that help you explore, create, and think like an innovator. *Code Girls United recently received a grant from [OpenAI](#).*

PAYA Resource Library is a searchable database of over 200 toolkits, best practices, case studies, and other resources from the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship's (PAYA) network of partners across the country. Whether you're just learning about youth apprenticeships or are a seasoned pro, you'll discover something useful to launch, expand, or improve a youth apprenticeship program.

News You Can Use

Can Workforce Pell Support Apprenticeship? Yes, But...

Guidance on Workforce Pell Implementation

Engaging Middle School Learners in Career Exploration is Critical to Future Success

This Study Found a Simple Way to Improve Student Learning in Math, an Essential Employability Skill

Measuring State Progress in Connecting Education with Opportunity

State Opportunity Index 2025 Executive Summary

AI Project to Help Washington Students Navigate High School to Career Transitions

Growth in Undergraduate Enrollment at Rural Colleges

Four States Join National Effort to Expand Education and Workforce Pathways for Justice-Impacted Individuals

Measuring US workers' Capacity to Adapt to AI-drive Job Displacement



Questions? Contact:
Gabrielle Eklund Rowley
WBL Collaborative Director
growley@ReachHigherMontana.org
406-422-6809
or visit wblmt.org.

Work That Matters

Work-based learning Work-based learning (WBL) is learning about work, at work and is a key component of career-connected learning.

In addition to building employability skills, WBL experiences help students develop **meaning** from their classroom learning and explore **purposeful** career opportunities. Employers who intentionally cultivate **belonging** in the workplace for young workers can gain access to future workforce talent.

The Montana Work-Based Learning Collaborative works to promote belonging, meaning, well-being, and purpose for all young Montanans by building capacity for high-quality WBL experiences.

There are components of work-based learning in the K-12 education system, the postsecondary education system, and the public workforce system – but no single entry point for students or employers to access them. Our work to improve coordination among agencies and WBL partners benefits Montana’s emerging workforce and Montana’s businesses.



Sent to: info@reachhighermontana.org

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Reach Higher Montana, 7 West 6th Ave. Ste. 516, Helena, MT 59601, United States