

Newsletter - June 2024

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.



- **Billings high school students took part in Market Day**, an event designed to teach kids about operating a small business through hands-on experience and person to person interaction. Market Day is facilitated by the Montana Chamber Foundation. KULR8 covered the event, and you can watch to learn more [here](#).
- **Livingston Community School Collaborative's new and innovative Job Shadow Program** placed seven 8th-grade students into local businesses over the course of a school quarter. This initiative aims to provide them with a clear application of classroom learning in real-world settings and prepare them to make informed decisions regarding future career pathways. Local business partners who hosted students this year included Dan Bailey's, Nardella's, Frontline Ag Solutions, Main Print Shop, Morrison Creative and Park County Community Foundation. The program was so well received by students that CSC is planning to quadruple the number of participants next school year by placing students in pairs at job sites and extending the program across two semesters instead of one.
- **Montana Department of Corrections recently launched the Welding Trailer Pilot Program** for members of the Helena Prerelease Center. In the hopes of reducing recidivism, the program teaches skills so participants can acquire their welding D1.1 certification.

"This program has been a work in progress, but we're excited to have it up and running," said DOC Director Brian Gootkin. "With this trailer, we'll be able to travel around the state and provide valuable training to offenders in all of our different facilities. This is another great educational opportunity for us to prepare offenders to enter our workforce with a trade and career."

The four-week program is a partnership between Great Falls College, Helena College, the Montana Department of Corrections, and the Department of Labor. [Learn more.](#)

- **The high school in Livingston has begun a monthly Work-Based Learning (WBL) Highlight.** Janine Ensign, the Park High School Work-Based Learning Coordinator, selects a WBL accomplishment (certification, placement success, etc.) of a student and shares it across school platforms so everyone can celebrate! Park HS had 29 students in WBL placements, hosted by 15 locations, this past school year. Partner businesses included: Livingston Healthcare, Sleeping Giant Animal Clinic, The Shane Lelani Center for Arts, Livingston Public School District, Shaneyfelt Dental, Elevate Montessori, Hesse Law Firm, Livingston Health and Rehabilitation Center, Livingston Veterinary Hospital, St. John's Leather Co., and our Sheriff's Department!

Additionally, OSHAcademy featured Park High School in their May spotlight!! OSHAcademy



News You Can Use

“To attract and retain an evolving workforce, employers must better understand what matters most to young workers. This means listening to their experiences, what they want at work, how workforce programs and systems currently support them and where there may be room for improvement.” [Click here](#) to read more and access resources on “worker voice”.

Terry M. Iverson helped develop a creative way to get Illinois middle school students more aware and involved in the manufacturing industry. [Learn more.](#)

“Too often, education and employment are competing in the lives of young people,” says Allison Gerber, the Casey Foundation’s director of employment, education and training. **“Youth apprenticeship programs allow young adults to balance school and work, making college more affordable for many.”** View resources and data on the benefits of youth apprenticeship for both young people and employers [here](#).



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Work That Matters

Work-based learning (WBL) opportunities span a continuum from workplace tours to apprenticeships (and many models in between).

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.

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