Work-based Learning Collaborative MONTANA

Quarterly Newsletter - September 2023

Thank you, Kathleen!

Many thanks to Kathleen O'Leary for her excellent work supporting the Collaborative this past year. Kathleen has accepted a new position at Carroll College, as Vice President of Student Engagement and Mission Integration. We know she'll shine in this new role, and lucky for us, she plans to continue her involvement as a member of the WBL Collaborative.

Thanks, too, to EdChoice for funding Kathleen's work with us this past year.

Brian McGrath from EdChoice continues to be a great partner in our work and member of the Collaborative. We are grateful to Brian and EdChoice for their support!

Upcoming Events:

September 20, 12:00 - 2:00 pm
Future Forward: Bridging Education, Workforce & Technology
hosted by The Policy Circle and EdChoice in Bozeman. Register Now!
September 26, 8:00 - 4:00
Worlds of Work Career Exploration Event, Great Falls. Learn more.
September 28-29
Montana's Future at Work, Red Lodge. Learn more.
October 6, 10:00 - 3:00 pm
WBL Collaborative Meeting, Great Falls

Teacher Externships, Year Two

This summer, twelve teachers from around Montana participated in the second year of the WBL Collaborative's Teacher Externship program. Teachers spent three days with a local business to learn about the business, the industry, and the various occupations available within the businesses. The participating teachers will take what they learned back to their classrooms to share with students, and will also share what they learned with their peer educators. The program is a wonderful way to build positive, long-lasting partnerships between Montana businesses and the education community. We are grateful to the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation for their support of this program.

Laura Devine, a middle school teacher at Circle Public Schools, participated in the program and was placed with ADF, International, Inc. in Great Falls. ADF manufactures highly complex steel structures. According to Laura, "In this Externship I was able to bring back a lot of ideas. When I was there, I asked about certain skills that should be taught in a classroom that would help students excel in interviews, workplaces, and help further their careers with promotions. After that discussion, I have been working with my students to learn these skills that can be used everywhere. I have been working with my peers to help them understand my goal of relating subjects to real-life experiences. All teachers have heard from their students, 'when will I ever use this?', and now I am able to tell my students a real answer with confidence because I had just done it."

The Teacher Externship program will continue in the summer of 2024, offering excellent opportunities for teachers in manufacturing , health care and additional industries, and hopefully creating more work-based learning opportunities for students.

When asked if she would recommend the program to other teachers, Mrs. Devine said, “I think this program was beneficial in more ways than I thought It would be. I went in with certain things I knew I wanted to know but the moment I got there and started learning I had more questions than ever. I learned more than I knew that I could. I also had thought I already knew about trade careers and how to implement them into my classroom but after going I realized that there was way more to it than what meets the eye. I think any teacher who wants to expand their teaching should join this because it will open their eyes in a very useful way that you can’t get from school lectures or from a classroom environment.”

To learn more please contact **Jason Butcher** at Reach Higher Montana.

West Creek Retreat Re-Cap

The Collaborative held its third annual retreat at West Creek Ranch, June 21-23. Once again, the Collaborative members worked hard, played hard, and left the ranch with a great plan for the year ahead. Thank you so much to the Arthur M. Blank Foundation for their continued support and belief in our work!

We had the pleasure of hearing from Marc Cazzazas from Whitefish High School and several of his students and business partners on their unique WBL model that trains future ag science educators; WBL experts from other states; and a panel of Montana legislators and Lance Melton from the Montana School Boards Association sharing updates from the 2023 Legislative Session.

Workgroups met to plan their priorities and work for the coming year. Remember that anyone can be involved in the

workgroups, so if you have staff or colleagues who want to get involved, contact **Kelly Cresswell**.

Workgroups and priorities for the coming year are:

Programs: Framework and essential components of programs (bringing in best practices), recruitment/train teachers
Policy: Policy explainers and WBL definition
Data: Expansion of stakeholder voice data, data dashboard
Communications & Marketing: Where are we presenting? Where are we disseminating?
Capacity: Funding, quarterly meetings, onboarding of members, annual retreat

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WBL News You Can Use!

- **Montana WBL Collaborative Toolkits for Students and Employers**
- **Modernizing Apprenticeships and the National Apprenticeship Act to Promote Inclusive Economic Growth**
- **Using State Highway Formula Funds to Support Youth Career Pathways in Construction**
- **Five Models for Earning College Credit in High School: Evaluating Their Potential to Smooth the High-School-to-College Transition for Underserved Students**
- **Catalyze Challenge Announces New Funding Opportunity**
- **USDOL Announces Apprentice Trailblazer Initiative**
- **From College to Career: Students' Internship Expectations and Experiences**
- **What are Youth Apprenticeships?**

Questions:

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