

Newsletter - October 2024

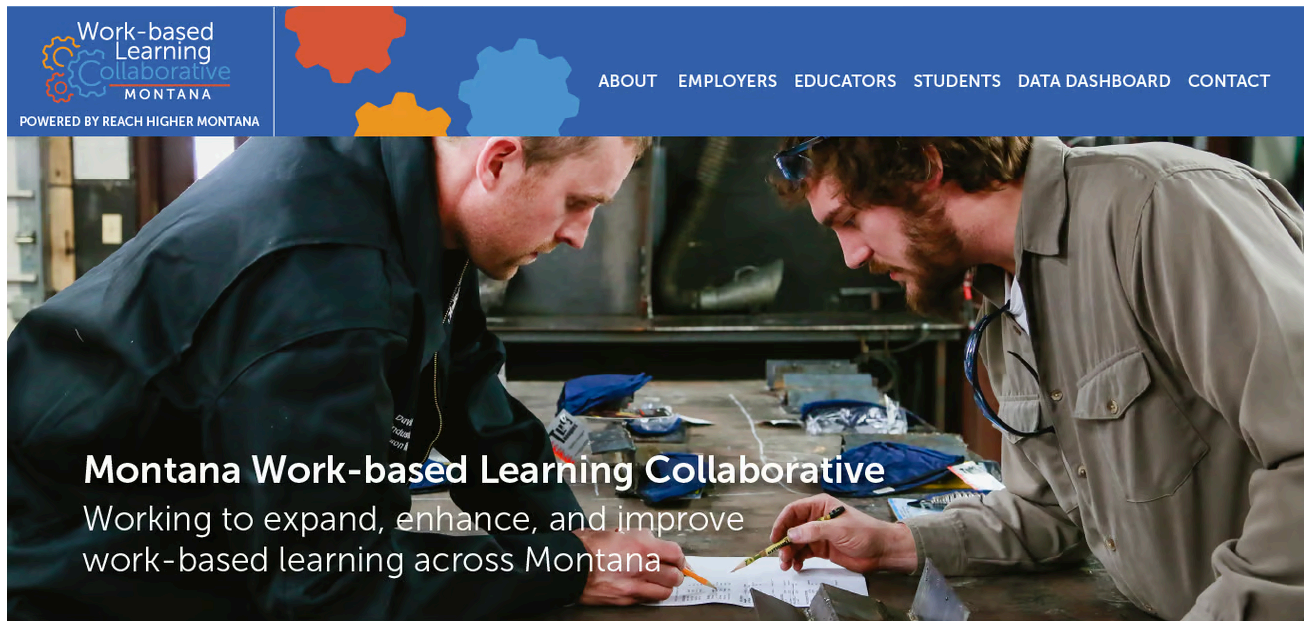
Collaborative Partner News

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.



New WBLC website!


The Work-based Learning Collaborative has a new website. Check out our fresh look at wblmt.org.



The screenshot shows the website header with the logo and navigation menu: ABOUT EMPLOYERS EDUCATORS STUDENTS DATA DASHBOARD CONTACT. Below the header is a large image of two men in work clothes looking at a document on a workbench. Overlaid on the image is the text: **Montana Work-based Learning Collaborative** Working to expand, enhance, and improve work-based learning across Montana.

What is work-based learning?

In simple terms, it is learning about work, at work. Work-based learning happens through several different structures, for example:



Guest speakers, tours and job shadows



Internships



Apprenticeships

Billings Public Schools - Future Ready: Explore Careers, Find Opportunities

Education cannot be one size fits all. Future Ready empowers students to choose classes that will help them discover their educational and career pathway, preparing them for high-skill, high-

demand, high-growth professions and giving them the tools, experience and confidence to make big decisions when the time comes.

Inmates at Montana Women's Prison Learn Welding

At the Montana Women's Prison in Billings, inmates have the opportunity to learn necessary life skills and trades for their life post-incarceration. A trailer from Great Falls College Montana State University has six welding bays and a little classroom space up front. It's a mobile classroom focused on teaching inmates career skills and preparing for life after prison. "We're getting two different certifications through this. So, it's pretty exciting. And, it's through the American Welding Society, so it's really fun. I really enjoy it," said April.



Educator Survey

We are seeking educators (teacher, administrator, staff) to help us learn more about work-based learning in Montana schools via a 5-minute survey. Please share your insights by clicking [here](#) and please help distribute this [survey](#)."

National Youth Apprenticeship Summit in Indianapolis

Three WBLC members attended The National Youth Apprenticeship Summit in Indianapolis September 17th-19th. The two days were filled with great information about youth apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities. Some of the highlights included sessions on the role of intermediaries, youth apprenticeship in healthcare, navigating insurance and liability concerns when employing youth, strategies for supporting equity and success, and the importance of hearing the youth voice in youth apprenticeship and work based learning. Attendees also participated in industry tours which included pathways in manufacturing, IT, finance and business operations.

One of the sessions was a three-hour introduction to youth apprenticeship (YA). WBLC members Kelly Cresswell and Jason Butcher discussed the importance of accountability for both youth apprentices and employers. At that session they also shared the work of the Work Based Learning Collaborative and the Data Dashboard. Attendees were very impressed with the work of the collaborative and many requested more information about the data dashboard with hopes of creating their own.



L to R: Jason Wirt-Corvallis Public Schools, Bo Bruimsma-Billings Public Schools, Bryce Wilson-Kalispell Public Schools, Melody Henry-Rocky Boy Health Center, Kelly Cresswell-Reach Higher Montana, Jason Butcher-Reach Higher Montana

KNOWLEDGE NUGGET

Work-based Learning Toolkit

Are you an employer who wants to offer work-based learning opportunities, but you're not sure where to start? Are you an educator building WBL opportunities? Start [here!](#) Work-based learning helps young people build essential skills and connections while developing the local workforce. If you have questions, [reach out!](#) We are happy to help.



News You Can Use

[Learn.Plan.Succeed. - a high school graduation requirement in Chicago](#)



Graduating high school is a landmark achievement for students, and Chicago Public Schools is making sure it's not the last! The Learn.Plan.Succeed. (LPS) initiative is a multi-year approach designed to ensure that students and families receive proper planning and support to prepare them for success in college, career and civic life. The initiative consists of a series of supports and includes a high school graduation requirement -- all students must demonstrate evidence of a postsecondary plan prior to graduating high school (postsecondary includes six pathways: college, military, employment, job training, apprenticeship, and gap year programs).

A Road Map to Implementing Work-Based Learning in Your CTE Program

As CTE aims to bridge the gap between the classroom and the workforce, work-based learning (WBL) offers immense value to today's students through hands-on learning experiences that bring students expert insight and exploration of industries and career opportunities. But what exactly is work-based learning? And what are steps you can take to implement it into your CTE program?

Varying Degrees 2024: New America's Eighth Annual Survey on Higher Education

If you like data, you'll love this report! New America's Higher Education Team released their annual survey and report on American perspectives on higher education. Over the years, the survey has showcased layers of public opinion on complex issues related to college value, funding, and accountability. It might sound conflicting, but even when Americans are not happy with higher education, a majority still see the value of gaining a postsecondary credential and would like to see greater state and federal funding to make college more affordable.

How to Grow the Impact of Education-to-Career Pathway Intermediaries

Regional education-to-career intermediary organizations are playing an increasingly critical role in the national education landscape. Through their leadership, K-12, higher education, youth serving organizations, and employers have joined forces to design career-connected learning opportunities that equitably accelerate students' path to a credential with value in the workplace. The functions these organizations play are key to expanding high-quality pathways and unlocking their massive potential to expand equitable economic opportunity.

Leveraging Student Agency in Career Exploration

How do we begin to combat the issue of high schoolers facing uncertainty as they approach graduation? The answer, American Student Assistance found, starts in middle school. By partnering with school districts interested in career exploration initiatives, ASA uncovered the tangible opportunity these programs provide — and a roadmap for other schools to follow in the years to come.

There Aren't Enough Internships to Go Around

Many college students have been told that an internship can help them explore a potential career, refine their skills and secure employment after graduation. But the supply of available internships in the U.S. isn't keeping pace with demand.

Of the 8.2 million students who wanted to intern in 2023, close to half—4.6 million—didn't end up participating, according to a new report from the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF). Students of color, along with first-generation, low-income and community college students, had an especially hard time landing an internship.

Making Work-Based Learning Work Better for Community College Students

This special report offers a look inside a competency-based classroom, explores how schools have revamped grading for a system in which proficiency is the expectation for everyone, examines the successes and pitfalls schools encounter as they shift to competency-based education, and spotlights professional development to help teachers teach in a way they likely never experienced as students.



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

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.

Sent to: info@reachhighermontana.org

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Reach Higher Montana, 7 West 6th Ave. Ste. 615, Helena, MT 59601, United States