

Newsletter - September 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.*



## Great Falls College Launches Carpentry Program

The comprehensive Future Build program is designed to make students job-ready immediately. “We’re making them apprentice-ready, combining hands-on training with safety education, tools, and the vocabulary that goes along with the trades,” says Danny Boyer, the Construction Trades Coordinator at GFCC. The carpentry program spans 10 weeks, with students spending four hours a day in the lab and another hour and a half on bookwork and theory.

“They leave with micro-credentials, their OSHA 10 card, first aid/CPR certifications, and a lot of hands-on training to develop the skills they’re going to need. They also leave here with a set of tool bags,” Boyer says. The program also offers support to students who haven’t yet earned a high school diploma, and helps them earn a HiSet.



## MMEC - Successful Upskilling for Business and Employee Growth

Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) worked with a processing and packaging company, Such Group International (SGI), to help define internal processes, build a career ladder framework, and design training modules. The Smart Talent framework provided a career roadmap where employees could see growth opportunities available to them. This provided an incentive for employees to “ladder up” their skill levels to advance their careers.

## Dept of Corrections and Helena College Celebrate Graduates

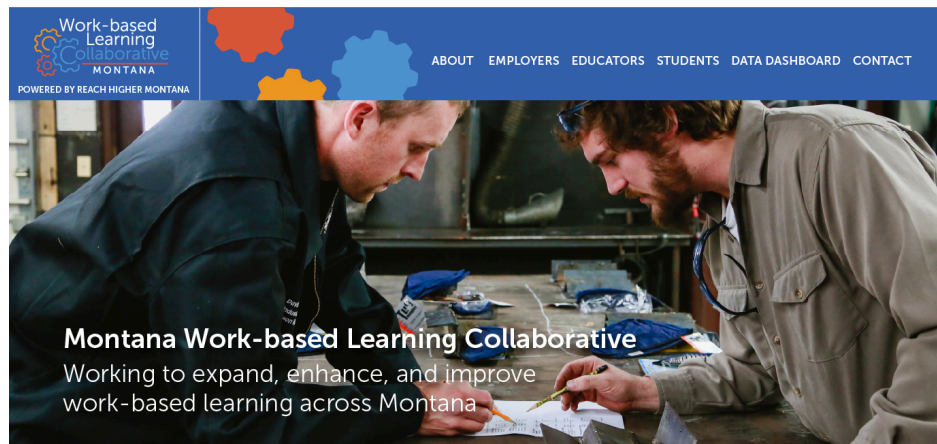
It was time to turn the tassel again at Montana State Prison (MSP) as six inmate students celebrated graduating from Helena College's automotive technology program on May 6. This was the second class of students graduating from the program with a Certificate of Applied Science. "With these certificates, offenders will have a foot up in the job market as they work on reintegrating into our Montana communities," Department of Corrections (DOC) Rehabilitation and Programs Chief Scott Eychner said.

"This class has been important to me because it has given me a formal education in a field I am passionate about," MSP graduate Bryce Adams said. "This course has given me the formal knowledge to be a professional technician. This class gives me a leg to stand on and possible employment that is not bottom of the barrel pay. This class ignited my desire to learn and continue future education."



## WBLC Website Update Coming

The Work-based Learning Collaborative is launching a new website soon! Look for our new, user-friendly site where you can learn all about work-based learning in Montana. We're excited to offer resources and easy-to-find information for employers, learners, and education professionals.



### 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

## KNOWLEDGE NUGGET

### What is High-quality WBL?

Five common principles of WBL programs:

1. **Career-Oriented.** Students focus on knowledge, skills and dispositions related to careers that pay a family-supporting wage.
2. **Equitable.** Every student can access WBL programs, with targeted support for those students impacted by inequity in the workplace and education sectors.
3. **Transferable.** Students earn certification and college credit for WBL experiences that continue to expand future options.
4. **Adaptable.** Knowledge and skills are transferable across many workplaces and not just focused on a specific employer.
5. **Accountable.** Established metrics measure success of the WBL program to ensure ongoing excellence.



Key indicators that exemplify high-quality WBL programs:

1. **Placement within a workplace.** High-quality WBL is located in the industry itself rather than taught within the school. This placement can be virtual or on-site depending on the job and sector.
2. **Mentorship and mentor training.** Successful placement of young people in the workplace requires a strong mentorship program with a professional in the field. Investment in training in this area indicates high-quality WBL.
3. **Skill quality and verification.** Skills verification is a critical element of high-quality WBL programs. The skills themselves need to be adaptable, industry-aligned and focused on specific employability skills.
4. **Choice.** Students in WBL experiences should have choices in how and where they progress. Many students will need to experience a series of different WBL settings in order to better understand a best fit.

*This text is from [careertech.org](http://careertech.org)*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Oct 2 - CompetencyWorks & Coffee: Exploring Work-Based Learning as an Entry Point to Competency-based Education

Join Aurora Institute for interactive discussions with work-based learning experts as we generate new strategies for integrating work-based experiences within a competency-based education (CBE) system. Engage in this structured networking session to exchange ideas and insights with fellow leaders, empowering you to drive innovation and student-centered designs within your learning communities. **Don't miss this opportunity! [Register here.](#)**



# WEBINAR

## CompetencyWorks and Coffee: Exploring Work-Based Learning as an Entry Point to CBE

October 2, 2024 | 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM EST

### Featured Examples:

Big Picture Learning  
CareerWise Colorado  
Chelsea Opportunity Academy  
Future Focused Education's X3 Internship Program  
ImBlaze  
Indiana Department of Education  
South Bronx Community Charter High School  
YouthForce NOLA



Facilitated by  
Laurie Gagnon



CompetencyWorks  
& COFFEE

**Oct 25 - Youth Entrepreneurship Event in Livingston** to learn more, contact Emily at [emily@csc4kids.org](mailto:emily@csc4kids.org).



### News You Can Use

#### MT DLI Post-Secondary Outcomes Dashboard

As summer winds down, a new class of seniors are getting ready to start the year in Montana. As many prepare for a big year, some may already be considering what's next. For those who can't make a decision without some data, the Post-Secondary Outcomes Dashboard by Dept. of Labor and Industry offers a look into the wage and employment outcomes of graduates from Montana's postsecondary institutions according to their program of study.

#### Innovation in New Mexico: Capstone Projects as a Path to Better Engage Students

Kristen LaVolpa, a consultant with Future Focused Education in New Mexico, recalls being labeled an "at-risk" kid in high school until she discovered breakdancing and the community and sense of purpose that along came with it. This led her to value lived experience as an important source of knowledge and look for ways to incorporate student interests into formal education settings. She's now a huge champion for capstone projects, which allow students to focus long-term attention on a personal, family, or community issue that's important to them.

Capstones typically involve research, interviews, data collection, field study, and reflection over multiple drafts. They culminate in a demonstration of what the student gained and how they are ready for life after high school...LaVolpa sees capstone projects as one of the best ways to encourage student agency.

#### Measurement for Mobility: How U.S. States Can Use Data to Incentivize Postsecondary and Workforce Success in Public Education

"Learning by working is essential to successfully connecting education to a career.

The data tell a compelling story: Undergraduates who complete a paid internship have higher-paying jobs after graduation. "Building Better Internships" looks at data from the National Survey of College Internships, administered by the University of Wisconsin in partnership with Strada. It examines the reasons students seek internships, common barriers they face in securing them, and how their experiences connect to career goals."

## 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.

## Dual Transformation in Dual Enrollment

Years of rigorous research and evaluation show dual enrollment is a powerful strategy for improving educational outcomes in high school and college. With the number of dual enrollment students nearly doubling in a decade and a growing hunger for greater student exposure to work-based learning (WBL), the appetite and opportunity to break down the traditional barriers between the worlds of secondary, postsecondary, and work has never been higher.

Some high school and college partnerships are evolving into a more comprehensive approach that includes co-designing, co-advising, and embedding dual enrollment in education-to-career pathways systems.

## Skyles, Buttigieg Highlight Apprenticeship as Key to Investing in Infrastructure Workforce

US Representative Emilia Skyles hosted Secretary Pete Buttigieg in Richfield, Ohio, to highlight local workforce development efforts, including expanding apprenticeship work there. Sykes and Buttigieg met with apprentices through the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 18, District 6. Sykes sponsored the National Apprenticeship Act (2023) to invest nearly \$4 billion in registered apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship, and pre-apprenticeship over the next five years.



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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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