

Work-Based Learning in Action: From Practicum to Apprenticeship in Arkansas

Ross White, Division of Career and Technical Education Director



What is Work-Based Learning (WBL)?



WBL is defined as a structured learning experience at the worksite for a specific timeframe that leads to a career path (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act). WBL programs contain three key components: the alignment of classroom and workplace learning; application of academic, technical, and employability skills in a work setting; and support from classroom and worksite mentors (<https://cte.ed.gov/wbltoolkit/>).

The Division of Career and Technical Education offers four credit bearing work-based learning opportunities:

1. Internship
2. Career Practicum
3. Pre-Apprenticeship
4. Youth Apprenticeship

WBL Courses Expanded



Internship is experiential learning that can be paid or unpaid which integrates knowledge and theory learning in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Students in grades 10 - 12 are eligible to enroll in this course.

It will **not** count toward completer status.

2025-2026 SY Numbers:

Internship - 4,080

WBL Courses Expanded



Career Practicum is a paid or unpaid work experience designed to assist students in grades 11 – 12 in their specific CTE program of study where students earn an industry recognized credential in one of many high-demand occupations. A student must be at least 16 years of age. The student must have completed a Level 1 and Level 2 course, in an approved CTE program of study to be eligible for this course.

It will count toward completer status.

2025-2026 SY Numbers:

Career Practicum - 420

WBL Courses Expanded



Pre-Apprenticeship is defined as a program or set of strategies designed to provide instruction or training to increase math, literacy, and other vocational and prevocational skills in order to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Department of Labor Apprenticeship (DOL) program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, Registered DOL Apprenticeship Programs. It may be an unpaid or paid Pre-Apprenticeship. A student must be at least 16 years of age. Completers of this program may be given special consideration for entry into a DOL apprenticeship program and/or applied time served, or credits earned toward fulfilling program requirements.

It will count toward completer status.

2025-2026 SY Numbers:

Pre-Apprenticeship - 69

Youth Apprenticeship program allows for individuals who are 16 to 24 years old to enroll in a registered apprenticeship program while still attending school full-time, either high school or college. The premise of Youth Apprenticeship is for younger individuals to become employed and begin their apprenticeship program sooner while receiving credit for RTI and OJT hours counting toward program completion. Youth Apprenticeship programs are required to have USDOL-approved standards.

It will count toward completer status.

2025-2026 SY Numbers:

Youth Apprenticeship - 7

Panelist Members



Debora Cosen

Work-Based Learning Coordinator
Division of Career and Technical Education

Derrick Daniels

Apprenticeship Director
Office of Skills Development

Markous Jewett

President & CEO
Academies of Central Arkansas Foundation

Patti Priest

Agriculture Teacher
Springdale Har-Ber High School

Panel Questions



1. What is a benefit you've seen for a student with a WBL opportunity?
2. What is a benefit you've seen for your community with the WBL Program?
3. What is a benefit you've seen for business partners with the WBL Program?
4. What barriers have you experienced and how you overcame it?*
5. What should an educator be mindful of when supervising students in a WBL experience?
6. What is the first thing as an educator I need to do to increase WBL Opportunities?
7. What do employers need from educators to begin the program?
8. What community partners have engaged with helping students get placed?
9. What community partners have engaged to help employers find students?
10. Can you explain the difference between an internship career practicum and an apprenticeship?
11. Can apprenticeships be created with anyone in the community?

Panel Questions

Q&A

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