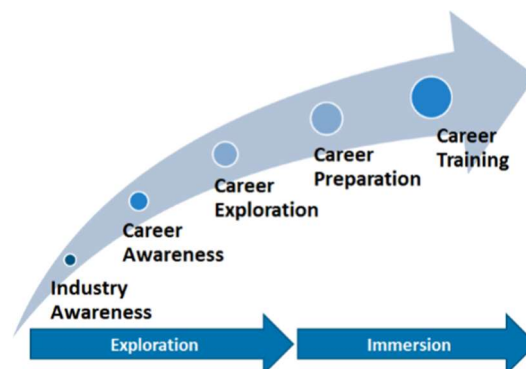


State and Local Tennessee Leaders Share Lessons Learned About Work-Based Learning

On June 25, 2018, state and local leaders in Tennessee shared lessons learned about work-based learning via a [webinar](#) hosted by the College & Career Readiness & Success Center (CCRS) at American Institutes for Research. Matthew Spinella, Director of Work-Based Learning & Industry Engagement at the TN Department of Education, and Richard Skipper, Assistant CTE Director and Work-Based Learning Coordinator for Coffee County Schools, discussed essential partners and roles that support work-based learning programs, and shared strategies for engaging those partners in work-based learning efforts.

In 2014, the TN State Board of Education adopted the work-based learning framework. State leaders recognized the need to prepare students early and consistently throughout K-12 education. The graphic to the right appears in the [framework](#) document, and it illustrates the progression of work-based learning experiences across a student's academic career.



Richard Skipper commented, “One thing we do know is that our students are going to be something someday. Ultimately we know that our students are going to be running our community one day. That’s really our job to prepare them to hopefully do it in a successful manner.” Coffee County Schools has experienced much success with their work-based learning program. The problem they are facing now is that business and industry are knocking down their doors for more students to fill positions—that is a good problem to have! Richard said that he actively seeks partners who accept high school students of any age because they understand that when they capture the interest of students at an early age, they tend to keep them. Notably, VIAM, an automotive manufacturer in Manchester, TN, offers all students a full-time position upon completion of the work-based learning program. Last year alone, 22 students were offered full-time jobs with VIAM.

At the state level, Matthew Spinella voiced the need for continuous communication and collaboration. He said that it is essential to engage appropriate stakeholders early and throughout the entire process. The programs and policies should remain fluid and be flexible enough to adjust to stakeholder needs. Most of all he said, “keep

the best interest of the students in mind at all times.” If programs do that, then they will undoubtedly experience success.

Key takeaways from the webinar center around communication and collaboration. A plethora of resources exists for states interested in pursuing work-based learning programs. The links below point to a few of those resources, as well as, the link to view the full webinar.

Additional Resources:

- [Archived Webinar](#)
- [Webinar Slides](#)
- [CCRS Work-Based Learning Definitions Report](#)
- [Work-Based Learning in Tennessee](#)