
Work-Based Learning, Policy and Rule

The Background:

Work-based learning is a proactive approach to bridging the gap between high school and high-demand, high-skill careers by providing students with critical employability skills that are difficult to learn through classroom-based instruction alone. The concept of work-based learning has expanded to cover a range of classroom-based and workplace-based experiences for students that build upon one another for deeper learning. These experiences foster employability skills, such as the application of academic and technical knowledge and skills, career knowledge and navigation skills, 21st century learning and innovation skills, and personal and social skills necessary for success in postsecondary education and careers.

This item will delete redundancies in SBE Rule 0520-01-03.06 by aligning the requirements for all forms of work-based learning, including service learning and school-based enterprise. It also establishes that a Work-Based Learning Framework, as outlined in SBE Policy 2.103, will govern the expectations for all forms of work-based learning experiences.

This item will also update Section 5 of SBE High School Policy 2.103 to establish the Work-Based Learning Framework that will govern the expectations of all WBL experiences that happen both at school and in the workplace. It addresses the structure, coordination, supervision, learning plans, learning assessments, and program evaluation requirements for effective work-based learning experiences.

The recommended rule and policy changes will provide greater flexibility for the Department of Education to expand work-based learning opportunities for students, using a Work-Based Learning Policy Guide and the Work-Based Learning Implementation Guide that can be updated annually. Both guides will adhere to the Work-Based Learning Framework as provided in SBE Policy 2.103.

To reach this point, the Division of Career and Technical Education (CTE) has undertaken a multi-step process to redesign work-based learning. The submitted rule and policy changes are the result of a nine-month effort to assess current work-based learning practices, align with the state's more rigorous CTE course standards, and provide more robust work-based learning opportunities for students across the state.

This process has involved the following steps:

- Survey various stakeholders (e.g. CTE directors, counselors and work-based learning coordinators) in order to ascertain areas of strength and opportunities with the current approach. Nearly 450 surveys were received.

- Conduct focus groups across all three grand divisions to complement the survey. Roughly 225 CTE directors, administrators, counselors, work-based learning coordinators and Tennessee employers participated.
- Contract with a third-party vendor (WestEd) to provide national perspectives and expertise and to analyze and assist with the revision of the department's current policies, resources, trainings and expectations.

As a result of this work, SBE Rule and Policy revisions have been made and submitted for final reading. In accordance with the proposed rule and policy updates, the Division of CTE has developed a Work-Based Learning Policy Guide, a Work-Based Learning Implementation Guide, and a Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum course. All items will provide consistent and clear learning expectations for rigorous, credit-bearing WBL experiences. The Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum course has been submitted for first reading with the CTE course revisions.

Since first reading, changes to this item include minor formatting and language updates to ensure clear and consistent terminology across SBE Rule and Policy, the Work-Based Learning Policy Guide, the Work-Based Learning Implementation Guide, and the Work-Based Learning: Career Practicum course.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends adoption of this items on final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.